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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*

September 2026



Forget-Me-Not: One Advocate's Fight Against Alzheimer's Disease

by Bishop Tracey Breashears Schultz

In June, I noticed a picture of Susan Leining on Facebook. She was in front of the state capitol in Washington D.C. wearing a purple sash over her dress and holding a sign which read, "I advocate for our first survivor #ENDALZ." I wanted to know more, so I asked her if she'd meet me for a conversation. She quickly replied that she'd be happy to talk about something that means so much to her. She has advocated for Alzheimer's research and education and has fundraised for a cure for the last ten years.

I know Susan as a member of Faith Lutheran in Dickinson. She served in various leadership roles through the years I was on synod staff, including as a member of the call committee that worked to call their current pastor; she is now on their church council.

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Camp Hope

by Jasmin Fiscal and Andrea Olguin Ledezma

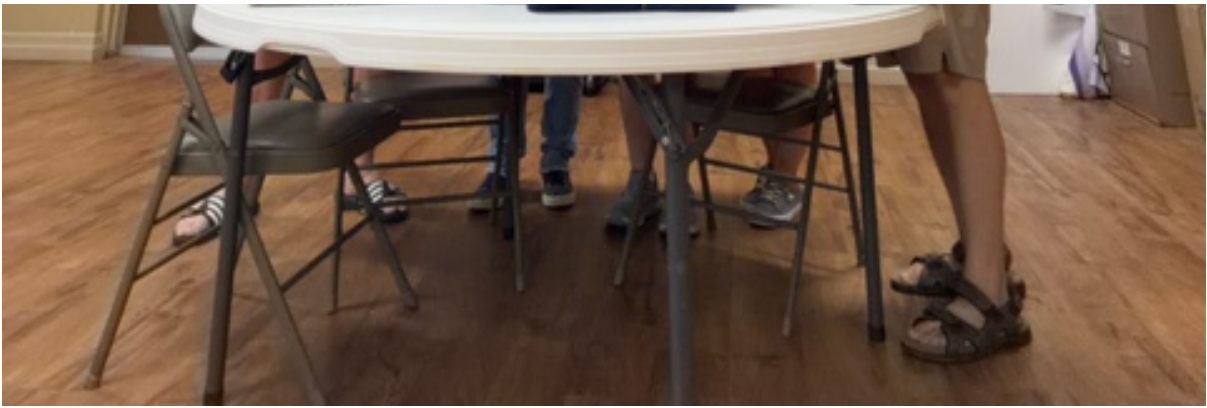
Have you ever experienced a camp that completely transformed your life?

Camp Hope Day Camp aims to do this for every camper, youth leader, adult mentor, and congregation. Camp Hope is a beautiful example of what planting a seed in the lives of young people can look like.

At the age of 8 and 9 years old Jasmin and Andrea attended their first year of Camp Hope at St. James Lutheran Church in Houston, TX. What began as a summer camp quickly became something much more meaningful. A summer day camp creates life skills, builds friendships, and helps children learn during the summer. However, Camp Hope did much more than that for Jasmin and Andrea, it created an invitation for their families to be part of a loving faith community through St. James. When they reached the age of 13 they were no longer campers, but their journey with Camp Hope did not end there. At this crucial point in their lives, Andrea and Jasmin were invited to begin using their gifts by serving through various leadership roles within the camp. Over several years, their leadership evolved from volunteer to staff to St. James Camp Managers to the national Camp Hope directors.

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Venezuelan Relief

by Margaret Hale, Church Council President, on behalf of the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour congregation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

What makes a good neighbor? When you discover your neighbor is in pain and suffering, it should take but a moment to offer compassion, hope and comfort—even if that neighbor is over 2,000 miles away.

The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour in Baton Rouge, Louisiana recognized the suffering endured by our Venezuelan neighbors after they were rocked by twin 7.0+ magnitude earthquakes. Beyond those killed and injured, tens of thousands found themselves homeless.

Sometimes it truly is who you know! Our beloved and ever resourceful Pastor John Perez identified three Lutheran churches in the Houston area who were already heavily involved with the Venezuelan relief effort: Santiago Apostol, Sagrada Familia and Principe de Paz. Additionally, the pastor of San Jose Obrero, Pastor Gabriel Marcano had direct connections to Lutheran churches within Venezuela and was already coordinating shipments.

156 pounds. LCOS collected and put together personal care kits (bath towel, soap, toothbrush, nail clippers, comb). Our humble effort to provide daily comfort, to recognize their humanity and to give our faraway neighbors a small sense of normalcy in their new normal.

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Learning, Collaboration, and Adaptive Leadership at The CaSTLE Project Gathering

by Deacon Aimee Elles

In mid-August, Pr. Jen Kindsvatter and I had the opportunity to participate in a gathering of leaders from approximately 24 ELCA synods engaged in [The CaSTLE Project \(Country and Small Town Lived Ecclesiology\)](#), a Lilly Endowment-funded initiative coordinated by Wartburg Theological Seminary. The project is designed to strengthen leadership and congregational vitality in rural and small-town contexts through a renewed focus on baptismal identity and discipleship in daily life.

One of the most valuable aspects of the gathering was hearing reports from synods across the church about how they are utilizing CaSTLE grant funds in their local contexts. Participants shared creative approaches to training both rostered and lay leaders, developing mentoring networks, and equipping congregations to navigate change. Alongside stories of innovation and success, leaders also spoke honestly about the challenges of adaptive leadership, including helping congregations move beyond familiar patterns and embrace new possibilities for ministry.

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You're Invited: Mission Events

During Synod Assembly, in May, I stated that I hoped every one of our congregations could be a mission partner. What does that mean?

Mission partners are ELCA congregations linked together in dynamic relationships to empower and expand the mission of both partners. Gifts, resources, and experiences are shared to deepen all efforts within God's mission. Through supportive relationships – praying, engaging, and giving – these congregations share in the excitement of proclaiming the gospel together!

The best model we know for this is one of accompaniment, which is very different from an established congregation giving a new or renewing congregation a financial gift and doing nothing more. This is an invitation to relationship!

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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...](#)

September & Early October Creation Care Events

- [Learning the Language of Creation book discussion group](#) – Tuesdays, September 1 – October 6, 6 p.m., online
- [Living the Change](#) – September - November, dates/times individually scheduled, online
- [Climate Solutions 101](#) – September 10 – October 15, 6 p.m, online
- [God's Work, Our Hands Justice Advocacy Event](#) – Sunday, September 13, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., Houston
- [Energy Conservation for Houses of Worship](#) – Sunday, September 13, 3 p.m., online
- [Faithful Resilience: A Study on Climate Resilience for Faith Communities](#) – Mondays, September 14 – October 19, 6 p.m., online

[Lutherans Restoring Creation: Faithful Resilience: A Study on Climate Resilience for Faith Communities](#)

- [Harris County voter Registration Event](#) – Sunday, September 27, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., Houston
- [Ready. Set. Vote!](#) – Sunday, September 27, 2 – 5 p.m., Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 3015 N. MacGregor Way, Houston, TX 77004
- [Heat Stress Prevention: Medical Community Engagement with Climate Change](#) – Sunday, September 27, 6 p.m., online
- ??? – Sunday, October 4, time TBD, online
- [Native Plant Pollinator Garden Refresh](#) – Saturday, October 10, 10 a.m. – noon, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., Houston
- [Justice Advocacy Event](#) – Sunday, October 11, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., Houston

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



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