

Annual Report and Thank You!

From Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson January 2023

Dear Pastors, Deacons, SAMs, lay leaders, members and friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

Happy New Year! Did you make a New Year's resolution? I wonder what would happen if entire congregations or even if the whole church council would make a New Year's resolution together. What would it be? What might be a God pleasing, faithful New Year's resolution for you, personally? Your church? Your church council?

What is your congregation's New Year's Resolution?

Maybe the New Year's resolution might be to begin every church meeting in the next year by asking a God question like, "I wonder, what does God want us to accomplish in this meeting today? How might what we do in our meeting today please God and be faithful to our baptismal promises?" As someone once famously said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. The main thing is Jesus." What if our New Year resolution is to repeat that phrase before every meeting?

As a synod, we are good at New Year's resolutions, or at least we always have resolutions at our synod assembly! This year our synod resolution will be to learn more about our indigenous neighbors. Jesus said that the main thing, the greatest commandment was to love God and love our neighbors. On Monday, January 23 we will be learning from our Ho-Chunk neighbors from Black River Falls at our Winter Theological Gathering *Rebound: Unsettled History-Hopeful Future* at Luther Park in Chetek. Click here to register. [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Winter Theological \(nwswi.org\)](https://www.nwswi.org/winter-theological-gathering)

At the synod assembly on April 29 our theme is *Rebound: From Worry to Wonder*, there will be resolution that will come before the assembly encouraging every congregation to learn about their indigenous neighbors and write their own land acknowledgement and include it on their website and welcome statements in their bulletins. What if your congregation's New Year's Resolution was to learn more about your neighbors and discover new ways to love them?

Our synod's New Year's resolution is to love our neighbors by learning more about our indigenous neighbors and encouraging congregations to write and use land acknowledgements.

What is a land acknowledgement?

It is formal statement that a public event is taking place on land

originally inhabited by [indigenous peoples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples). (Wikipedia) This statement recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as the traditional stewards of the land and the relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. Here is the link to our synod's land acknowledgment. [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Land Acknowledgement \(nwswi.org\)](https://www.nwswi.org/land-acknowledgement)



Synod staff update: In this new year there will be a new synod minister. Pastor Diane House will begin her call as our synod's new Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) on January 9. We will officially welcome her at Winter Theo. We will miss Pastor Erin Nelson, but wish her well in her endeavor as owner of The Purple Tree, an eco-justice business in Hudson.

I am truly grateful for your prayerful and financial support of the work we do together as the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel of Jesus Christ so that the next generation will come to know and love Jesus and all generations will experience God's forgiveness and grace in their lives. Thank you for all the ways you are supporting Bible Camps, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Malawi, Lay school, Seminarians, Youth Gatherings, Justice Teams, World Hunger Appeal, Lutheran Social Services, Lutheran World Relief, Synod Ministers, Call processes, Area Strategies, Faithful Innovation and all the other work we do together in Jesus' name. Thank you and Happy New Year.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson



A prayer for the New Year:

Eternal God, you have placed us in a world limited by space and time. In this new year, protect us from all the distractions and help us focus on the main thing, the transforming work you have done through Jesus. Grant that we may know your presence, see your love at work, and be strengthened by it to do what is most important; to love you and to love our neighbors. Help

us to find joy in this life of faith, and invite others to walk in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord, **AMEN**

Introduction to the NWSWI Land Acknowledgement: *Let us acknowledge that we are on the ancestral homelands of indigenous peoples of the Council of Three Fires including the Ho-Chunk, Menomonee, Dakota, and the Anishinaabe (or Ojibwe) which includes the Bands of Red Cliff, Bad River, Fond du Lac, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Mille Lacs, and St. Croix. Each of these Nations and Bands is unique and sovereign. We are grateful to their ancestors for their deep commitment to caring for the land.*

Calendar of upcoming synod events--for more information

<https://nswwi.org/home/calendar?sapurl=LyttYzg5L2xiL2NhLyszMnN0bnc0P2VtYmVkJmJyYW5kaW5n>

January 23 Winter Theological Gathering, Luther Park, Chetek

February 11 Christ Jam Middle school Youth Gathering, Bethany Rice Lake

February 15 Due Annual Reports to Bishop, Mission Support, Reports A & C.

March 11 Walking Together, synod wide learning event, Bethany Rice Lake

March 15 Resolutions for Synod Assembly deadline

March 12-18 YA trip to Pine Ridge

March 18-25 YA trip to New Mexico

April Youth Advocacy Day

April TBD Pre Assembly Forums on Zoom

April 29 Synod Assembly, Bethany Rice Lake

July 17-20 Rostered Ministers Gathering Phoenix AZ

July 24-27 TriSynod Sr. High Youth Gathering UW River Falls

Aug 4-20 Synod Trip to Malawi

September Fall Ministry Retreat Heartwood

November 1-6 Synod Civil Rights Pilgrimage

January 8-17, 2024 Synod Trip to the Holy Land