

I-K Lutheran

Where God is doing new things

One of our synod's pastors recently asked me "What's on your Kindle? What are you reading?" Of course, what I am reading (and listening to while driving across this territory) says something about where at least some of my attention is focused and what I am giving a good portion of my mental and spiritual energy to. In fact, reading is a key spiritual, personal, and professional discipline for me. I often encounter the Word as I wander through works of fiction and non-fiction alike. Here's a list that includes a couple of books I recently finished along with a few that I am currently working my way through.

[The House of Broken Angels](#) by Luis Alberto Urrea. As a Mexican-American family gathers for a weekend that includes both a funeral and a birthday party, flashbacks reveal how each of the family members arrived in America and portray the losses, challenges, opportunities, and roadblocks they experienced along the way. At the same time, the story of this family's weekend together draws the reader deep into the complexity of the joys and sorrows that make up just about every family's life.

[Song of Exile: The Enduring Mystery of Psalm 137](#) by David W. Stowe. As many folks know, I often quote Psalm 137 when talking about the situation of the church today. As the landscape in which we go about mission and ministry has changed dramatically in recent years, many of us cry out with our ancient ancestors, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Stowe explores the amazingly wide variety of profound ways in which this psalm has found its way into music, movies, TV shows, literature of all sorts, and a wide variety of secular and religious communities.

[Building Successful Communities of Practice: Discover How Connecting People Makes Better Organizations](#) by Emily Webber and [Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge](#) by Etienne Wenger, et al.

This fall, conference deans and synod staff will begin exploring how we might become an intentional "community of practice" and, consequently, cultivate our conference ministeriums as communities of practice. Such communities both build deep, trusting, mutually supportive relationships among their participants and create space for them to help each other grow in their gifts and skills for their particular ministries.

[Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US](#) by Lenny Duncan and [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving. Lenny Duncan is an African-American ELCA pastor. Debby Irving is a white woman. Each tells their own story and experience with race and racism while also offering insight about confronting racism within ourselves and in church and society.

[Anna Pigeon Mysteries \(Series\)](#) by Nevada Barr. Each of the novels in this series of mystery novels takes place at a different national park and features Anna Pigeon, a park ranger and sleuth. Reading the series is a little like touring the parks while also getting caught up in murders, mayhem and mysteries, as well as the complex issues and people that create and are affected by them.

What are you reading?

Peace be with you,

Bishop Bill Gafkjen

September 2019



Upcoming Synod Youth Ministry Events

Confirmation Retreats (grades 6 through 8 and adult mentors)



- **Friday evening, September 20, through Sunday morning, September 22, 2019.**
Held at **Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in St. John, Indiana** (please bring air mattress, sleeping bag, etc.)
- **Friday evening, October 4, through Sunday morning, October 6, 2019.** Held at **Lutheran Hills Camp, Morgantown, Indiana**
- We will focus on the Lord's Prayer and we will help students identify their unique gifts, grow in faith, and building connections for youth across the synod. There will be experiential learning sessions, a hands-on service project, and time for recreation and fun. Worship will be held on Sunday morning.
- Cost is \$75 per person which includes lodging, food, and programming at Holy Shepherd and \$100 per person at Lutheran Hills.

Synod Youth Gathering/Bishop's Day (grades 7 through 12 and adult mentors)



- **Friday evening, November 22, through Sunday morning, November 24, 2019**
- Held at **Cambria Suites Hotel, Noblesville, Indiana**
- Rachel Kurtz will be our musician and speaker
- We will have experiential learning sessions, a hands-on service project, games, recreation, music, fun, and a focus on building connections for youth from across the synod.
- Cost is \$125 per person which includes lodging, food, and programming.

Indiana-Kentucky Synod Youth Leadership Summit (grades 7 through 12 and adult mentors)



- **Thursday, June 4, through Saturday, June 6, 2020**
- Held at **Embassy Suites Hotel, Noblesville, Indiana**
- Join us for a focus on leadership development, faith formation, and building connections for youth across our synod. There will be engaging speakers, a digital service project, and lots of fun.
- Cost is \$75 per person which includes lodging, food, and programming.

Indiana-Kentucky Synod Youth Mission Trip (grades 7 through 12 and adult mentors)



- **Sunday evening, June 21, through Saturday morning, June 27, 2020**
- Held in **Louisville, Kentucky**
- Our time will be packed with practical acts of love and service as we engage people with Christ-like empathy and compassion. Evening activities will give us the opportunity to sample the culture and diversity of Kentucky's largest city. We will spend Friday at Kentucky Kingdom and Hurricane Bay Water Park.
- Cost is \$175 per person which includes everything except travel to and from Louisville.



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.