

The World is About To Turn 2021
Minneapolis Area Synod
Community Organizing Training for Congregational Leaders
Offered January 11-15 and June 21-25, 2021

Times such as this call for prophetic leadership from our faith communities – churches being places of engaged transformation amidst shifting sands. The synod and a group of congregations have come together based on a shared interest to be this kind of embodiment of church. We see the need for developing a common framework and language on community engagement.

Out of this vision, this group has planned a multi-day training focusing on skill-building and strategic planning offered both in January and in June. It's more relevant than ever for our leaders to come together to build common tools and shared analysis – so we can act collectively, connecting our deep faith values to our neighborhoods and public life. This training will be led by local organizing staff with training from Midwest Academy. Be prepared to walk away challenged, excited, and empowered in your own leadership.

Bringing a team from a congregation is recommended; individuals interested in participating should contact Emilie Bouvier (e.bouvier@mpls-synod.org), Brenda Blackhawk (b.blackhawk@mpls-synod.org), Meghan Olsen Biebighauser (m.olsen@mpls-synod.org), Melissa Pohlman (mpohlman@centralmpls.org), Nick Tangen (nickt@ulch.org), or Bob Hulteen (b.hulteen@mpls-synod.org) as soon as possible to secure your spot.

As a conference-style training, be prepared for an immersive experience even while virtual. The expectation is for everyone to be fully present for interaction and discussion throughout the training. This means setting aside this time from other work or distractions as much as is possible. We are excited for this transformative time together.

Details

We will have two upcoming dates for organizing training in 2021:
January 11-15 on Zoom from 9am – 3pm each day, with plentiful breaks
June 21-25 (more details to come)

Cost

- Full Price \$545
- Reduced Rate \$430
- Register for the January Organizing Training here:
<https://mplsareasynod.regfox.com/january-2021-organizing-training>
- Register for the June Organizing Training here:
<https://mplsareasynod.regfox.com/june-2021-organizing-training>
- Note there is a required \$150 deposit, which can be paid on through the registration page. The full amount is due one week ahead of the training.
- If you need additional financial assistance to attend, please reach out to one of the organizers above. We never want cost to be the reason someone doesn't attend.

What to expect

Midwest Academy has been training community organizers and leaders to build power and effect change since 1973, and is committed to “...fostering the creation of democratically governed organizations which win real improvements in people’s lives, give people a sense of their own power to improve society, and alter the unequal relations of power to build more democracy and participation for freedom and justice for all.”

The Minneapolis Area Synod’s mission is to work together “...so that all experience gracious invitation into life-giving Christian community and live in just and healthy neighborhoods. The Synod has partnered with Midwest Academy since 2017, bringing pastors, congregations, and community leaders to a week-long training every year to develop skills and learn how to apply the practices of community organizing in their faith communities and neighborhoods.

Each participant will learn concrete skills and frameworks for effective community organizing, including: understanding relations of power, how to choose an issue, developing a strategy, recruitment, and how to hold public accountability meetings with decision makers. There is a focus on developing leaders and building skills that are applicable across a wide variety of organizing models.

These tools are critical for running effective issue campaigns and are especially powerful in the hands of congregations and organizations organizing and mobilizing in their neighborhoods and states. Churches and leaders who are seeking out ways to bolster their public voice and act powerfully in the public square will learn where, when, and how to engage. We’ll ground ourselves in the theological and historical roots of faith-based community organizing as well.

Participants will have the added benefit of meeting and learning together with other leaders from across the Minneapolis Area Synod working to build power in their communities!

In 2021 we will gather on Zoom for the week-long training, 9am-3pm every day, with plenty of breaks, including for lunch.

With COVID-19 impacting every aspect of our public and private lives, now is a vital time to learn how to leverage technology and win campaigns while remaining socially distant. What are some of the unique elements of holding accountability meetings online? How do we recruit effectively when we cannot meet in person? These are some of the questions we will address over the week together in the unique context of training and organizing online.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen at the Minneapolis Area Synod has called community organizing “a spiritual practice for doing justice” and has encouraged and invited leaders and congregations from across the Synod to attend training. We hope that you can join us for this powerful time together.