

# **RESOURCES FOR LEADERS & CONGREGATIONS**



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*This resource packet is a living document, thoughtfully assembled to share a wide range of materials recommended by leaders across the Minneapolis Area Synod. We share these resources in the spirit of mutual support, as we seek to learn from one another and live out what it means to be church together. Please note that while we value the contributions of those who suggested them, the synod office has not formally reviewed or endorsed every item included.*

*If you're seeking a particular kind of resource or have questions about what's here, feel free to reach out to Jessie Goeke at [j.goeke@mpls-synod.org](mailto:j.goeke@mpls-synod.org). We're here to support you.*

*~Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA*

# Employee Handbooks and Personnel Policies

\*A note from Bishop Jen: For legal reasons, the synod cannot provide you with a full employee handbook. We can, however, point you to some *examples* of good ones you or your colleagues have helped create and people are willing to share. These examples can be used as a base for creating a handbook (or adjusting). The synod's legal counsel will occasionally offer guidance about a new law related to employment, etc.

## **Central Lutheran Church**

Please contact any of these pastors for a copy of their handbook:

Pastor Peter Nycklemoe: [pnnycklemoe@centralmpls.org](mailto:pnnycklemoe@centralmpls.org)

Pastor Melissa Pohlman: [mpohlman@centralmpls.org](mailto:mpohlman@centralmpls.org)

Pastor Stephanie Friesen: [sfriesen@centralmpls.org](mailto:sfriesen@centralmpls.org)

## **Grace Lutheran Church**

Contact Jessie Goeke at [j.goeke@mpls-synod.org](mailto:j.goeke@mpls-synod.org) for a copy of their handbook. For questions, you may reach out to Pastor Joanna Mitchell at [JoannaM@graceandover.org](mailto:JoannaM@graceandover.org).

## **Valley of Peace Lutheran Church**

Contact Jessie Goeke at [j.goeke@mpls-synod.org](mailto:j.goeke@mpls-synod.org) for a copy of their handbook. For questions, you may reach out to Pastor Ashley Osborn at [aosborn@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:aosborn@valleyofpeace.org).

## **Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd**

Contact Jessie Goeke at [j.goeke@mpls-synod.org](mailto:j.goeke@mpls-synod.org) for a copy of their handbook. For questions, you may reach out to Pastor Deb Bergstrand at [D.Bergstrand@goodshepherdmpls.org](mailto:D.Bergstrand@goodshepherdmpls.org)

## **University Lutheran Church of Hope**

Contact Jessie Goeke at [j.goeke@mpls-synod.org](mailto:j.goeke@mpls-synod.org) for a copy of their handbook. For questions, you may reach out to [ULCH@ulch.org](mailto:ULCH@ulch.org)

## Lawyers

### **Timothy Prindiville**

Real estate law (works with Elim Robbinsdale)

Phone: 612-746-1043

Email: [info@prindivillelaw.com](mailto:info@prindivillelaw.com)

Website: [Prindiville Law, PA](#)

### **Brian Aust**

Immigration attorney

Phone: 612-724-4860

Email: [brian@austschmiechen.com](mailto:brian@austschmiechen.com)

Website: [Brian Aust – Aust Schmiechen](#)

### **Jewelie Grape**

“Practical legal solutions to companies and non-profit organizations on matters related to employee benefits, human resources, and other important business issues.”

Phone: 651-633-1717

Email: [jewelie@jgrapelaw.com](mailto:jewelie@jgrapelaw.com)

Website: [J. Grape Law | Home](#)

### **Michael Gan**

Especially for clergy contract law and negotiations

Email: [gan@peerganlaw.com](mailto:gan@peerganlaw.com)

Website: [Michael J Gan | Peer, Gan, Gisler & Favreau LLP](#)

### **Mark Prokosch – Prokosch Law, LLC**

Immigration attorney

Phone: 651-333-3039

Website: [Prokosch Law LLC](#)

### **Volunteer Lawyers Network**

Website: [Home - Volunteer Lawyers Network](#)

### **Thomas Anderson**

Immigration and criminal law

Phone: 612-239-3212

Email: [thomas@andersonlf.com](mailto:thomas@andersonlf.com)

Website: [Thomas Anderson - Anderson & Anderson Law Firm](#)

### **Antone Melton Meaux**

Employment mediation, Employment law, also a chaplain/minister

Phone: 612-337-9009

Email: [antone@work-resolve.com](mailto:antone@work-resolve.com)

Website: [Meet Antone - Work Resolve Mediation](#)

**Craig Brandt at Moss and Barnett**

Employment Law

(member of a local congregation)

Phone: 612-877-5360

Email: [Craig.Brandt@lawmoss.com](mailto:Craig.Brandt@lawmoss.com)

Website: [Craig A. Brandt Moss & Barnett Law Firm: Moss & Barnett - Minneapolis, Law Firm - Attorneys](#)

**Nick May at May, Fabian and Anderson**

Employment Law

Phone: 612-540-3225

Email: [nmay@fmalawyers.com](mailto:nmay@fmalawyers.com)

Website: [May, Nicholas G. B. | Fabian May & Anderson, PLLP](#)

**Steve Smith at Nicholas Kaster Attorneys at Law**

Employment Law

Phone: 612-256-3206

Email: [smith@nka.com](mailto:smith@nka.com)

Website: [Steven Andrew Smith | Nichols Kaster PLLP](#)

**Jim Kaster at Nicholas Kaster Attorneys at Law**

Employment Law

Phone: 612-256-3202

Email: [kaster@nka.com](mailto:kaster@nka.com)

Website: [James H. Kaster | Nichols Kaster PLLP](#)

## Videography

*The following individuals have consented to having their names, business information, and/or contact information included in this resource packet.*

### **Kevin Sullivan at Kevin Sullivan Films**

(works with Elim in Robbinsdale)

Phone: 952-452-6501

Email: [kevinsullivanfilm@gmail.com](mailto:kevinsullivanfilm@gmail.com)

Website: [Home - Kevin Sullivan Films](#)

### **Angela Schoenbauer**

Part-time video production coordinator/video editor at Holy Trinity in New Prague

Email: [angela@holytrinityonline.org](mailto:angela@holytrinityonline.org)

### **William Jones at Reel Quest Media**

Email: [reelquestmedia@gmail.com](mailto:reelquestmedia@gmail.com)

Website / Portfolio: <https://reelquestmedia.mypixieset.com/>

Instagram: Reel Quest Media

## Live Event Production

*The following individual has consented to have their name, business information, and/or contact information included in this resource packet.*

### **Matt Dellwo**

Freelance Audio Engineer

Phone: 763-458-6978

[LinkedIn Profile](#)

# Spiritual Directors

*The following individuals have consented to having their names, business information, and/or contact information included in this resource packet.*

## Spiritual Director Directory — Christos Center for Spiritual Formation

### **Pastor Susan Engholm**

Email: [sengholm@gmail.com](mailto:sengholm@gmail.com)

Website: [susanengholm.com](http://susanengholm.com)

### **Sam Rahberg**

Phone: 320-428-0371

Email: [info@samuelrahberg.com](mailto:info@samuelrahberg.com)

Website: [www.samuelrahberg.com](http://www.samuelrahberg.com)

### **Pastor Pamela Stalheim Lane**

Email: [pamelastalheimlane@gmail.com](mailto:pamelastalheimlane@gmail.com)

*"I am part of a Spiritual Direction group called "Kyrie Collective" and my website page is:  
<https://www.kyriecollective.com/pam-stalheim-lane>"*

### **Pastor Brice Eichlersmith**

Phone: 612-998-2128

Email: [eichlersmith@mac.com](mailto:eichlersmith@mac.com)

*"I do spiritual direction through the lens of systems theory. The cost is your time. I have done spiritual formation with people of all ages, all genders in all stations in life for 30 years."*

### **Pastor Brian Mundt**

Email: [brian@loyolaspiritualitycenter.org](mailto:brian@loyolaspiritualitycenter.org)

Website: [Brian Mundt • Loyola Spirituality Center](http://BrianMundt.com)

### **Pastor Catrina Ciccone**

Details: can meet in person or online

Email: [catrinaciccone@gmail.com](mailto:catrinaciccone@gmail.com)

Materials: [Brochure](#)

### **Pastor Gretchen Rode (she/her)**

Email: [grcolby@gmail.com](mailto:grcolby@gmail.com)

Website: [deepbreathspirituality.com](http://deepbreathspirituality.com)

### **Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert**

Phone: 612-270-8069

Email: [mandersonlippert@gmail.com](mailto:mandersonlippert@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.mariaandersonlippert.com/>

**Pastor Carrie Stiles**

Phone: 763-245-4003

Email: [carriestiles69@gmail.com](mailto:carriestiles69@gmail.com) (most direct way to contact Carrie)

Website: <https://www.carriestiles.org/>

**Zanny Johnson** (grief and recovery-informed spiritual director and retreat leader)

Email: [hello@zannyjohnson.com](mailto:hello@zannyjohnson.com)

Website: <https://www.zannyjohnson.com/>

**Pastor Aaron Fuller**

*"I am not a spiritual director, but I am a Navy chaplain with 11 years of experience, training, and education in mental health chaplaincy, destructive behavior intervention/prevention, and spiritual/moral/ethical advisement."*

Email: [pastor.adfuller@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.adfuller@gmail.com)

**Pastor Jay Lukis (They/Them)**

Phone: 612-888-1313

Email: [pastorlukis@gmail.com](mailto:pastorlukis@gmail.com)

Website: <https://spiritspacecollective.org/>



# Digital Ministry Tools

**Livestream on YouTube or Other Platforms:** Livestreaming a church service on YouTube involves broadcasting the service in real-time over the internet, allowing viewers to participate remotely. This method uses cameras, streaming software, and a stable internet connection to share the service live, making it accessible to a broader audience beyond the physical church. It helps maintain community engagement and provides an option for those unable to attend in person.

- “We connect to many congregation members weekly through this tool.”
- “Meets people where they are and keeps them tethered to the community at any distance.”
- “Comments from viewers helps form a community.”

**ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini:** AI assistants; web and app-based

- “If any leaders want to learn AI, let’s chat!” (Adam Teske)
- “Chat GPT is amazing at supporting sermon writing.”

**Ritual - Wellbeing Practices (App):** Ritual offers an oasis of audio practices to strengthen your wellbeing and nourish your spirit. Our curated practices are guided by compassionate leaders in self-care, faith, and culture. They share their wisdom in accessible practices, designed to meet a wide range of wellbeing needs.

**Zoom Office Hours:** Zoom office hours allow you to hold virtual meetings at scheduled times. By setting up recurring Zoom meetings, staff can offer consistent availability, manage participant flow with a waiting room, and ensure private, one-on-one interactions.

**Calendly:** Calendly is a scheduling platform that syncs with your calendar to streamline meeting bookings. By sharing your Calendly link, invitees can view your availability and select a time that works for both parties, eliminating the need for back-and-forth emails. Once a time is chosen, the meeting is automatically added to your calendar [How does Calendly work? \(Everything you need to know to start scheduling\) | Calendly](#)

**Digital Storytelling:** Digital storytelling is the practice of using digital tools to create and share stories that combine various multimedia elements like text, images, audio, and video. This method allows for dynamic, interactive, and immersive narratives, making it a powerful tool. By leveraging technology, digital storytelling can engage audiences in more meaningful and impactful ways.

- “It is a thing! It matters! People connecting and finding belonging in the digital space is not less-than, but equal to in person.”

**Digital Teaching Through Bible Studies and/or Book Studies:**

- “People are more likely to attend an evening meeting if they can do it at home.”

**Cafeteria Christian:** *“Cafeteria Christian is a podcast and now a community all coming around the idea that we don’t have to be “that kind of Christian.” Along with co-hosts Nora McInerney, Pastor Emmy Kegler, and Jesse Ross, Pastor Natalia Terfa explores a variety of topics relevant to current events and questions of faith, with knowledge and humor and a dose of irreverence.”*

**Teología Sin Vergüenza (Theology Without Shame) Podcast:** *“Theology Without Shame is a digital project that seeks to amplify the voices of people who are unashamedly Christian or theologians, and also unashamedly activists, feminists, and/or queer. These individuals give theological language to the queer feminist resistance that has been excluded from hegemonic and patriarchal Christian discourses. In our podcast, you'll find tools to defend yourself against oppressive Christian discourse and strengthen the struggles for the liberation of people marginalized because of their gender, identity, and sexual orientation.”*

**Soulforce, Inc. - Spirit Resource Library:** *“Soulforce creates accessible, spiritually-healing political and theological resources that center our commitment to justice for all marginalized people. These resources are made to demystify and rethink fundamentalist ideologies while offering new approaches to the Bible and Christian theology.*

*All of these digital resources are free to download on this webpage. Many of these educational resources are downloadable in Spanish at our Spanish-language landing page. Select resources are also available in other languages.”*

**The Ecumenical Leadership Academy:** *“The Ecumenical Leadership Academy is designed to strengthen the ministerial capacity of Latino congregations by improving the way they identify and develop healthy leaders who will be equipped to serve their communities with a clear denominational identity. This academy will focus on the formation of lay leaders with an emphasis on evangelical mission, empowering them with the necessary tools to actively live their faith in the world. Each class is led by a group facilitator, using recorded online classes by people with experience in each mission field.*

*Initially, the Ecumenical Leadership Academy began as a Lutheran effort, called the ELCA Latin Lutheran Academy. Due to the interest of Episcopalians, followed by Methodists, we opted for an ecumenical name, as we seek to advance the Kingdom of God in its various ecclesial expressions.”*

### **Red Createe**

A network of individuals and resources aimed at creating and providing liturgical music and art from an Ecumenical and Latin American perspective. Red Createe offers many services including:

- Coaching in musical and artistic production through workshops and meetings
- New musical resources
- Spanish- and Portuguese-translated music and liturgies
- Biblical-theological reflection on the liturgy in Latin America through workshops and other trainings
- Workshops and trainings for musicians, artists, and liturgical leaders
- A database of songs produced in the context of faith communities in Latin America
- Consulting for churches or organizations that require a specific approach

## Technology Tools

**Meeting Owl Device:** A smart video conferencing tool which offers 360-degree video, audio, and intelligent focus on speakers. The device enhances virtual meetings by providing a more immersive and interactive experience for hybrid teams.

- “We use Zoom for a hybrid Bible study (and to do that we bought a Toucan, a low-end Meeting Owl, which works GREAT as a tool for linking those in the room together with those online).”

## Mental Health Resources

*This is a more general list of mental health resources, largely including directories or searchable databases. We know that many of you have more specific referrals or recommendations that you rely on, and we encourage you to continue utilizing those as well!*

**FastTrackerMN:** FastTrackerMN.org is a dynamic behavioral health search tool that gives Minnesotans access to real time information and availability. It improves connections for Individuals and collaboration for systems. Whether you're searching for yourself, a loved one, a patient, or looking for general information, this is your place to start!

**Psychology Today:** Directory of Mental Health Therapists in the United States

**Help Me Connect: Early Childhood Mental Health Clinics:** Professionals at these agencies are specialty trained to work with parents and families to assess and treat trauma, emotional or behavioral concerns of babies, toddlers, and young children. Use the filters to adjust your search.

**Help Me Connect: Crisis Nurseries:** Immediate, short-term childcare is available to kids that need temporary supervision while a family is going through a crisis or stressful situation. A crisis nursery is generally available on a 24/7 basis. Crisis intervention services can include child abuse prevention and family support programs.

**Help Me Connect: Mental Health Crisis Lines:** For adults and children in crisis. Crisis lines provide immediate support to help ensure a person's safety and help them take the next steps toward resolving a problem. Crisis intervention hotlines/helplines are often available through telephone, email, chat, text or other communication methods.

**Children's Mental Health and Family Services Collaboratives in Minnesota:** A Children's Mental Health and Family Services Collaborative is a group of community partners (local agencies, health care providers, county staff, school representatives, faith communities, law enforcement, nonprofits and other organizations) that actively work together to develop partnerships, increase access to services and resources for families, engage in advocacy efforts, and help to ensure quality delivery of services to children, youth, and caregivers.

**Help Me Connect: Mental Health Collaboratives**

**[Click a county on the map to view the collaborative website](#)**

**988 Lifeline:** Using the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is free. When you call, text, or chat the 988 Lifeline, your conversation is confidential. The 988 Lifeline provides you with judgment-free care.

**COPE: Hennepin County Mobile Crisis Response:** If you're in crisis or know someone who is, we can help. The Cope mobile crisis team can come to where you are. Cope responds to anyone in Hennepin County who needs an urgent response—individuals, families or communities. Cope has bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff available for face-to-face, phone, and video visits and uses interpreters when needed. If the situation is life-threatening or you need an immediate response, call 911. Cope is available 24/7 In Hennepin County: 612-596-1223. For those outside of Hennepin County, call 988.

**Canopy Roots:** We serve communities through unarmed, trauma-informed, culturally affirming crisis response. At Canopy Roots, we envision a world where mental health crises are met with empathy, not force. Our unarmed, trauma-informed crisis response team is here to serve communities by responding to crises with respect, cultural understanding, and true compassion.

**We proudly serve as the Behavioral Crisis Response team for the City of Minneapolis,** available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to respond to 911 mental health emergencies citywide. View the [Behavioral Crisis Response Quick Guide](#) to learn more.

# Church Management Software

Church Management Software (CMS) is a tool that makes the day-to-day operations of your church simpler, easier, and cheaper. It allows you to:

- keep church member information up to date
- streamline communication with your staff, volunteers, and members
- automate donation & financial tracking
- And more!

View these articles to learn more and see comparisons of the different CMSs out there:

- [\*\*2025's Top Church Management Software Tools \(Compared and Ranked\)\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Church Management Software's Buyers Guide\*\*](#)

## Background Check Services

**Safe Gatherings:** *“Safe Gatherings is an online abuse prevention program that screens and educates staff and volunteers to help prevent abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in group settings. When employees and volunteers are trained to identify potential abusers, recognize the signs of abuse, and know how to handle reporting, they are better equipped to prevent abuse.”*

*Upon successful completion of the Safe Gatherings application, background and reference checks, and online training program, each applicant will receive documentation of approval valid for three years and will have continued access to the online training program for one year.*

*The price per applicant for the individual church program available through the Safe Gatherings website is \$45. This includes processing of two electronic references, a national and multi-county of residence 7-year background check, national and state of residence Sex Offender Registry check, and the 1.5-hour online abuse prevention and boundary awareness training.”*

**Oxford Document Management Company:** *“For over 30 years, Oxford Document Management (ODM) has been the vendor of choice for religious organizations seeking comprehensive background checks of their clergy, church workers and volunteers. We offer a full array of background investigation services—from formal written reference checking programs to criminal history, motor vehicle and credit bureau records.”*

**MinistrySafe:** *“MinistrySafe offers comprehensive background checks designed for ministries serving children and other vulnerable populations... MinistrySafe also provides comprehensive training, screening forms, sample policies and an online system to track preventative protocols.”*

**Protect My Ministry:** *“Provides background checks that help ministries implement and maintain a thorough background screening program for employees, staff, and volunteers. They focus on preventing sexual predators and violent offenders from working with children and youth.”*

**PSI Background Screening:** *“An accredited organization that provides background checks for religious organizations, including churches. They emphasize the importance of thoroughly screening individuals hired to work or volunteer in a church.”*

**Lifeway One Source:** *“The program provides discounted prices on background checks for churches and religious organizations looking to protect their ministries. Screen your staff, volunteers, treasurers, teachers, bus drivers, camp counselors and more! Through the Lifeway One Source program, churches and religious organizations can receive discounted background screenings through [Clear Investigative Advantage \(CIA\)](#). CIA is a full-service background screening agency providing churches with background checks since 2001. Their mission is to help you establish a secure environment while delivering accurate results in a timely fashion.”*

# Resources for Running a Capital Campaign

**Kairos Christian Resource Development:** “Our unique approach to resource development or fundraising ministry is holistic and adaptable. It is designed to not only maximize the potential for generous giving but to also lay the foundation for long term growth, health and vitality.

Kairos’ primary objective is to help organizations maximize their missional and financial potential. We understand the challenges of being faithful to your mission and making bold and courageous decisions to move that forward. Through a process that embraces your ministry’s vision, assesses your resources and develops the leadership to carry out your plans, we will help you build the courage to step into any initiative.”

**Olson Advancement:** “Steve Olson has been involved in stewardship development for more than 30 years. He has served congregations in the Pacific Northwest and the Midwest. In those faith communities, he learned from many faithful stewards the joy of giving and the excitement of funding mission together. His growing interest in making connections between faith and response led him to develop stewardship education programs and lead efforts to establish endowments. As a parish pastor, he was involved in capital appeals, building projects and debt reduction campaigns.

This experience led to work with a Midwest firm as a program director for capital campaigns, feasibility studies, and stewardship consultation. He directed campaigns for 56 congregations and specialized ministries, raising over \$50,000,000 over and above ongoing gift support.”

Services offered:

- Mission Assessment & Advancement Planning
- Feasibility & Implementation Studies
- Stewardship Consultation
- Capital Campaigns & Mission Appeals

**Brenda Moore & Associates:** “I’ve been in your shoes. I understand the struggle to raise money for ministry. I share your faith-inspired burden to fund life-saving work. Times like these are no stranger to me either. I’ve weathered 3 major recessions and many a crisis. I’m wired to not just survive but thrive during changing times. I want to be your guide. You can lean on my 40 years of experience and expertise. We’ve worked in and with 100+ faith-based nonprofits and churches to raise hundreds of millions for ministry.

We will help you reach your goals...

You’ll be up to speed in no time at all. We coach you wherever you’re at on your learning curve and give you ready-to-use tools and replicable resources. You’ll be on the path to a sustainable financial model. We keep you focused on the work that accelerates your gift income for current and future ministry needs. You’ll be inviting gifts that transform lives. We walk alongside you every step of the way with strategy, systems and support.”

**The James Company:** “Since 1986, The James Company has conducted over 1,800 fundraising programs in more than 1,500 congregations, faith-based organizations and non-profit institutions nationwide. To help you achieve your goals, we offer a wide range of development and fundraising services and resources to help your congregation or organization cultivate and receive needed financial support. As a partner with you, our



focus is on the growth of your mission. The following are just a sample of our wide variety of services. Defining your vision, crafting a long-range strategic plan, implementing a capital fundraising plan, cultivating a year-round emphasis on giving.”

**Rev. Pete Reuss of GSB Fundraising:** “While GSB offers a wide spectrum of fundraising consulting services, our specialty has been and remains, general development consulting with a specific focus on strengthening and expanding the overall development department.

Our goal in working with all our fundraising and non-profit clients is to put into place programs and procedures that will continue to produce over the years and in the process reduce or even eliminate the need for our services.

Contact our team to learn more about the variety of ways we can help non-profits and congregations get to the next level. With a successful track record of over 40 years of fundraising and consulting, we have the tools, knowledge, and experience to help you and your organization succeed.”

\*Rev. Pete Reuss is has worked with many local ELCA churches and is an ELCA pastor and former DEM.