

# WE ARE ZION



**Zion Lutheran Church**

**2714 James Street**

**Marinette, WI 54143**

**715-735-7898**

**zion@newbc.rr.com**

**[www.zionlutheran-marinette.org](http://www.zionlutheran-marinette.org)**

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## January 2026



## **Zion's 2025 Congregation Council**

Laura Chaltry — President

Dean Schoen — V.P.

Eric Morois — Interim Secretary

LeeAnn Limberg — Treasurer

Tatem Schroeder

Phil Strohl

Sarge Rudell

Mark Swenson

Kathy Heimbuch

Adison Rosenfeldt, Youth Member

## **Zion Staff**

Pastor — Amanda Kossow

Office Administrator and Financial Secretary — Marissa Tharp

Choir Director and Organist — Ann Buscher

Accompanist for Choir and Organist— Rachel Rosenfeldt

## **Zion Ministry Contacts**

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### **Worship**

Worship Leadership Scheduling — Ann Buscher

Assistants — Ann Buscher (Ushers, readers, acolytes, communion assistants, set up/ clean-up communion)

AV Team — Troy Cording, coordinator

Banners — Karen Dill

Bulletin and Newsletter Assistance — Marissa Tharp

Candles (eternal and oil) — Deb Mylener

Praise Band Worship — Bill Tipple

Hymn Selection — Ann Buscher

Wine and apple/grape juice — Marissa Tharp

### **Building Maintenance – Interior/Exterior**

Supplies — Gary Grom

Handyman — Jack Heimbuch

## Committees/Groups

Caring Ministry — Karen Sylvester, Judy Stehle, Sarge Rudell  
Confirmation Classes — Pastor  
Funeral Luncheon — Ann Buscher, Carol Johnson, Karen Sylvester and Cheryl Maxwell  
Harvest of Hope Community Garden — John Radloff  
Kitchen Supplies — Marissa Tharp  
Mission Endowment Comm. — Phil Strohl  
Money Counters — Karen Dill, Bonnie Schoen and Pat Mittag  
Nominating Comm — Ann Buscher  
Personnel Comm. — Troy Cording  
Property Comm. — Mark Swenson  
Ruth Women's Circle — Jane Landenberg  
Sanctuary Arts — Barb Grom, Karen Dill, Carol Johnson, Sally Broetzman, and Ann Buscher  
Sew for Mission — Carol Magnuson  
Social Ministry — Heidi Beland  
SPARK — Johanna Zuehls  
Stewardship & Generosity — Karen Sylvester, Bonnie Schoen, John Radloff  
Youth Ministry Treasurer — Karen Dill  
Worship and Music — Ann Buscher



## Reflections

Back on Dec 7, during worship, I invited us to reflect on where we might see green shoots, or signs of God's activity, in this congregation. Here is a summarized list of what people are perceiving:

- Increased presence at worship
- New pastor
- Joy in witnessing missed people reconnect and participate.
- Youth participation in worship
- Discussion of social issues
- Welcoming guests and new members
- Joy in people's faces as we get closer to Christmas
- New members and new volunteers engaging in worship and other church activities
- Sharing the love of God with community during the season
- Visits with the pastor
- The congregation being more involved in the services
- Intentionally reaching out to include new people
- Broadening social ministry outreach
- Continued upkeep of the church property
- Seeing many friendly people helping me, sharing in the love, teaching me, and helping others. Growing in the Lord, loving the people and the Lord. Guidance to keep me on the right path.
- Outreach of genuine concern and love
- Upward growth
- Celebration and remembrance of baptismal covenant
- Fresh approaches to ministry and novel ideas
- Embracing the past and looking toward the future
- Responding to congregational and communal needs with financial support, food, supplies, etc.

- Singing different hymns
- Attending as a visitor to support a loved one who's a new member
- Generosity—humbly helping others who are in need
- Forgiveness
- Regularly worshipping as a family and witnessing the tradition be passed on to the next generation
- Seeing children grow and take on leadership

Here is where people saw green shoots beyond Zion:

- New laws being started to decrease testing on animals
- Maple tree stump in backyard continuing to grow shoots
- The creation of community through Meals with a Friend
- Family, career, health
- Birth of two beautiful babies
- Hope for healing

*“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” (Isa 11.1)* As we begin 2026, with all the messiness and goodness in this world, let us keep looking for God's green shoots through the faithful lens of Jesus. The One who does not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness and equity.

Christmas and Epiphany blessings,  
Pr. Amanda



## Update on the Annual Report and Annual Meeting!\_\_\_\_\_



If you are responsible for a yearly write up for the annual report, please email it to [zion@newbc.rr.com](mailto:zion@newbc.rr.com) or drop it off at Zion's office by January 12th! The report will be ready for the congregation by Sunday, January 18th. Physical copies will be

available in the narthex as well as a PDF copy on our website.

Our Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 25th following the service. All confirmed members should make a point to attend.

## Mental Health Corner\_\_\_\_\_

“Consequently, actions that successfully improve the overall mental health of the population are likely to be accompanied by other important benefits to society.”

*Elliott Goldner, Emily Jenkins, and Dan Bilsker, 2016*

## Zion to Host Blood Drive\_\_\_\_\_



Zion is hosting a blood drive January 16 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the social hall. To make an appointment, people may call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or schedule an appointment online.

## Thank you!\_\_\_\_\_

We just wanted to express our gratitude for all the thoughtful cards and gifts! -Marissa and Pr. Amanda

# upcoming events

## What's Around the Corner?

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Zion is buzzing with upcoming worship, service, and fellowship opportunities! Below is a brief outline of what is “around the corner.”

- Jan. 4: Second Sunday of Christmas, 9:30 a.m. worship with Holy Communion and via YouTube.
- Jan. 7: SPARK, 5:30 p.m.; Choir, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 11: Baptism of our Lord. 9:30 a.m. worship with Holy Communion and via YouTube. Praise Band Sunday. Conference Youth Event @ First Presbyterian Church in Menominee from 1-3 p.m.
- Jan. 12: Write-ups for Annual Report due.
- Jan. 13: Sew for Missions, 9 a.m.; Council meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 14: SPARK, 5:30 p.m.; Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.; Choir, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 15: Ruth Circle, 3 p.m.
- Jan. 16: Blood Drive, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Jan. 18: Second Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30 a.m. worship with Holy Communion and via YouTube.
- Jan. 21: SPARK, 5:30 p.m.; Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.; Choir, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 25: Third Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30 a.m. worship with Holy Communion and via YouTube. Annual meeting after worship.
- Jan. 27: Sew for Missions, 9 a.m.
- Jan. 28: SPARK, 5:30 p.m.; Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.; Choir, 6:30 p.m.



## January Eternal Light

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The Eternal Light for January is in celebration of all who struggle during the winter season.

## **Congregation Council Highlights**

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The Congregational Council met on December 9th, at 6:30 p.m.

**Pastor's Report:** November 2025 average attendance was 77. During the month of November, pastor made 7 home visits, 2 hospital visits, 2 office visits, was in various committee meetings, virtually attended the Walk with our Indigenous Neighbors team meeting, and participated in a book study with other synod clergy via Zoom.

### **November Financial Reports**

- General Fund Balance: \$138,409
- Capital Improvement — transfer of \$20,000 from Unused Pastor Salary CD to the Social Hall Floor fund
  - Balance: \$97,639
- Boiler Loan balance as of Dec. 1: \$10,012
- Budget draft review/Benevolences to be discussed more at the annual meeting. There was a motion to approve the amended budget made by Pr. Amanda. Mark seconded the motion to approve the recommendation of this newest budget (draft #5), dated Dec 10, 2025, to the congregation for the 2026 annual meeting, which was made by Pr. Amanda, seconded by Dean, and approved electronically.

### **Committee Reports**

- **Mission Endowment Fund:** Phil discussed that payments have been made, and modifications to the fund will be forthcoming.
- **Personnel Committee:** We are looking to hire a custodian.
- **Property and Safety Committee:**
  - Floors: Mark contacted a cleaner to clean the kitchen and entryway floors. They were onsite December 22 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost of floor cleaning is \$325.
  - The church bell was worked on 12/9 for most of the day, up until just the start of the meeting. Still



not working as it should, the company needs to order a part for the bell and will return to install it.

- More handicap signs are going to be installed. Shooby's will get new signs, and Mark will install them.
- Mark also got the quote from Macco's on the floor but didn't get a chance to review before meeting will have more information at January meeting.

## Old Business

- **Website Redesign:** Pastor Keith got back to Marissa regarding the website. Marissa now has all the necessary access to update the website as needed.
- **Vanco App & Online giving:** More discussion and research are needed on the Vanco app or another option for online giving. Now that Marissa can update the website, there may be more options.
- Revisit the percentage formula of general fund transfers from congregation donations
- **Mission Endowment by Laws** — A summary of the changes is as follows:
  - Pg 2: The ELCA Endowment Pooled Trust Fund is the custodian of the fund, not the Mission Endowment Committee.
  - Pg 3: While the policy requires two signatures, the current practice is for the treasurer to sign the checks. Do we want two signatures or just one?
  - Pgs 4-5: It's recommended to delete this section, as it doesn't apply to the committee, but only to the custodian.

## New Business

- Annual Meeting date

## Tabled Business

- Adult Day Services
- College Scholarship Fund: Guidelines from 2019

The council will meet again January 13th at 6:30 p.m.

## January Collection

Zion is Called to Go Where Jesus Leads and our Social Ministry Committee is committed to showing our congregation ways to live out that calling in our community. During the month of January, we will be collecting items for the Peshtigo Food Pantry with a focus on comforting, warming foods.

Suggested collection items are:

- Jarred sauces and dry pasta
- Canned or dry beans
- Soups, chili and stews as well as canned items to make soup with
- Boxed potatoes, canned meat and fish
- Jams & jellies, pancake mix and pancake syrup
- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, instant dry milk, canned or boxed milks
- Baking needs: flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt
- Cornbread / corn muffin mix
- Canned fruits and vegetables

## Altar Flower Sponsorships

Zion has altar flower sponsorships available for 2026. The cost of sponsoring the flowers for one week is \$15. Dates are reserved on a first come first serve basis so it's never too early to reserve a special date! You can take the flowers home after service! To reserve a date, please call or email Zion's office at 715-735-7898 or [Zion@newbc.rr.com](mailto:Zion@newbc.rr.com).

## January Conference-Wide Youth Event

On Sunday, January 11, youth between 6th-12th grade are invited to First Presbyterian Church (923 5th Street in Menominee) from 1-3 p.m. for an afternoon of games and fellowship. The event will include a devotion, pizza, soda, a dedication to the church's new Youth Game Room, and plenty of time to play games. Bring your favorite board game or try your hand at ping pong, darts, foosball, and more! Friends are welcome! Please RSVP by **Thursday, Jan 8** to Pr. Amanda at [pramandak3@gmail.com](mailto:pramandak3@gmail.com) or on FB.

## The Stewardship and Generosity Corner

*The goal of Zion's Stewardship and Generosity Team is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them.*

**2 Corinthians 9:7** *"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

This year, the congregation was not asked to complete a Zion pledge card. Rather, the Stewardship and Generosity Team is asking you to review your level of giving to Zion and to consider what changes you can make for 2026. Thank you for your generosity.

In addition, the following article was written by Natasha Crain on her site, <https://natashacrain.com/>, and fits in beautifully with our theme of Encouragement for the month of January.

### **7 Ways Christian Encouragement and Secular Encouragement Look Very Different**

As much as I love Facebook, I've become jaded lately by the onslaught of memes offering simplified life wisdom. One in particular caught my eye this week. I don't want to criticize the work of a specific site or person, so I'm not going to post the original photo here. It was from one of many sites devoted to "positive thinking" and featured the following advice:

#### **Tell Yourself:**

- *Everything will work out*
- *Things will get better.*
- *You are worthy of great things.*
- *The time is now.*
- *This too shall pass.*
- *You can be who you really are.*
- *You can do this.*

At first glance, this looks like a simple list of encouraging (though cliché) statements. For some reason, however, I was struck by how a list of encouraging statements would look totally different if written from a Christian worldview. This list provides an excellent conversation starter for your kids and offers a great opportunity to discuss the difference between secular and Christian viewpoints in everyday living.

For each statement above, ask 1) what people typically mean when they say it and 2) how that matches or does not match what the Bible tells us. (You can tailor these explanations to any age; for younger kids, simply explain that people *do* make the statement, describe what it means, and discuss how that compares to what the Bible would say.)

*The bottom line is that secular encouragement and Christian encouragement are rooted in vastly different worldviews.*

I've provided a Christian "translation" for each statement and some key talking points below.

**Secular encouragement:** *Everything will work out.*

**Christian encouragement:** *God works all things together for good for those who love Him.*

When people say "everything will work out," they typically mean "everything will work out in a way I'm OK with." But much of this life is out of our control, so we're not living in reality when we tell ourselves that. It's also important to understand that things don't "work out" (in that sense) any more so for Christians; the Bible makes it clear that we will face as many challenges as anyone else, and possibly more. That said, Romans 8:28 does tell us that God works all things together for good *for those who love Him*. That doesn't mean everything in our lives will be good by our definition, but that God will take the things that happen (good or bad) and bring good *out of them*.

**Secular encouragement:** *Things will get better.*

**Christian encouragement:** *You can pray for your deepest needs and desires.*

Similar to the problem with “everything will work out,” we can never know that things will get *better* in this life by our personal definition. When, as Christians, we hope for a situation to improve, however, we can turn to our Creator. He has *asked* us to bring our requests to Him. We can’t count on positive thinking to change a situation, but we can count on God hearing our prayers and answering them according to His will and purposes. That offers a hope that passive positive thinking cannot.

**Secular encouragement:** *You are worthy of great things.*

**Christian encouragement:** *You are invited to do great things for God’s kingdom.*

On the whole list, this is probably the statement that is most contrary to a Christian worldview. Our entire purpose in this earthly life is to participate in and further God’s kingdom. Every one of us has gifts God has given us for that purpose, not because of any “worthiness” of our own, but by His grace.

**Secular encouragement:** *The time is now.*

**Christian encouragement:** *Your eternal life has already begun!*

Author Dallas Willard, in his classic book “The Divine Conspiracy,” suggests that Christians too often see their lives in two separate phases: the earthly life, then a totally separate eternal life after. He emphasizes that we have a single, eternal life to live that we are *already in the process of living* – and that when we embrace that truth, our perspective is transformed. We stop passively waiting for another life to begin and start

actively participating *today* in eternity. What an amazing thought. We are already living in eternity!

**Secular optimism:** *This too shall pass.*

**Christian optimism:** *Your earthly troubles pale in comparison to eternal glory.*

It sounds biblical, but the Bible never says “this too shall pass.” However, in 2 Corinthians 4:17, Paul talks about the temporary nature of our struggles in the context of eternity: “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” When we fix our eyes on the eternal, our earthly troubles pale in comparison.

**Secular optimism:** *You can be who you really are.*

**Christian optimism:** *You have been set free from sin to find your identity in Christ.*

From a Christian perspective, the problem is that far too many of us are already being who we “really are” – slaves to the sinful desires of our flesh (Romans 7:14-24). When we have the Spirit within us, however, we are free to find a new identity in Christ. Paul explained this in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

**Secular encouragement:** *You can do it.*

**Christian encouragement:** *With God, anything is possible.*

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but you just might *not* be able to do “it,” whatever it is. The Bible is all about *God* doing “it” through humans who could never do it themselves. Think of Moses talking to Pharaoh despite his trepidation, little David fighting a giant Goliath and Daniel surviving the lion’s den. God

has accomplished history in spite of our abilities. With Him, however, all things are possible.

A meme of Christian encouragement would look pretty different than the original...

***When you need encouragement, remember:***

*God works all things together for good.*

*You can pray for your deepest needs and desires.*

*You are invited to do great things for God's kingdom.*

*Your eternal life has already begun!*

*Your earthly troubles pale in comparison to eternal glory.*

*You have been set free from sin to find your identity in Christ.*

*With God, anything is possible.*

## **January Birthdays**

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January 3: David Francour

January 4: Mary Hayward

January 5: Adison Rosenfeldt  
and Daniel Zuehls

January 10: Johanna Zuehls

January 13: Oliver Swenson

January 15: Dianne Slack

January 18: Gina Boucher

January 20: Kathy Heimbuch

January 21: Sharon Powilaites and Drake Schutt

January 22: Shawn Limberg

January 24: Pamela Lund and Tatem Schroeder

January 25: Beverly DeGroot and Denise Despins

January 26: Colleen Madden

January 30: Shirley Kaufman

## **Worship Canceling Procedures**

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With winter here and snowstorms around the corner, we wanted to remind the congregation about how we let you all know that worship is canceled. In the event that there is extreme weather that could make it unsafe for people to travel to the church building for worship, we will follow the steps outlined below.

1. The pastor and either the council president or property person will consult with each other Sun morning to determine if there is a need to cancel. If two of these three people are not available, then the second person to be consulted and help make the decision will follow as such: vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
2. If it is deemed necessary, then the following will occur:
  - a. One of the two who makes the decision will contact the office administrator to change the answering machine announcement, send out an email blast, post it on the church's FB page and website, and contact available news stations (WLUK-Fox 11 and WFRV-CBS, Channel 5). Both will split responsibility for getting in touch with the worship leaders for the day.
  - b. You are asked to check one of the options and pass the word along however you see fit.
3. If worship is canceled, then so will all other scheduled ministry activities that day.

## **Ruth Circle Group**

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The Ruth Group will meet Thursday, January 15, 3 p.m. for bible study. All are welcome to attend.

## **Recycle Your Sheets!**

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Did you receive new bed sheets for Christmas? You may bring your old ones to Zion to be recycled into beautiful new patchwork quilts by the Sew for Missions ladies. All material is welcome and put to good use. Thank you!



***Join us in lifting up our siblings in Christ, in prayer as we remember their baptism***

January 1: Beverly DeGroot, Carrie Heitmeier, Jean Hruska, Alice Larson, and Dean Schoen

January 3: Lynn Francour

January 5: Mary Hayward

January 7: Carol Magnuson

January 8: Naomi Dumke

January 9: Jaclynn Knopik and Mary Thielen

January 10: Ainsley Emler

January 11: Barb Bereza

January 15: Susan Fischer

January 17: Addalynn Brown

January 18: Spencer Martin

January 20: Karen Dill

January 27: Alexis Roth and Gabriel Roth

January 30: Carissa Kempka



**Funny Corner!**



## Where to find Zion's Information\_\_\_\_\_

Zion has a gauntlet of places where you can stay current with the happenings within Zion!

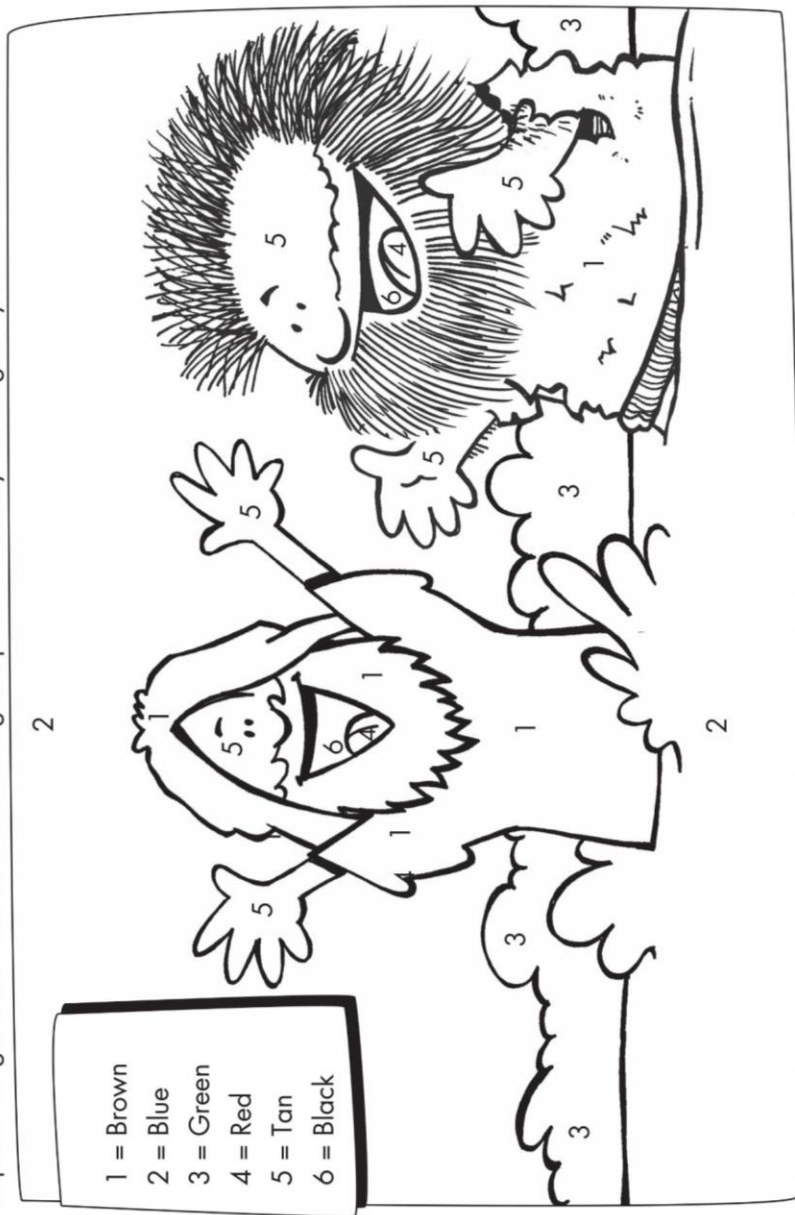
- ⇒ We publish a weekly Announcement sheet that includes, but is not limited to: the schedule of events for the upcoming week, Birthdays, special announcements and members to lift up in prayer.
- ⇒ Zion has a Google calendar! You can view it by going to our website and clicking the "Calendar" tab.
- ⇒ Zion also has a Facebook page, that contains pictures of various activities, events that will take place (Sew for Missions & Blood Drives—just to mention a few).
- ⇒ We also publish a monthly Newsletter; you're reading it right now! It is available in print, on the website, and via email. If you have not received a notification via email and would like to, please email your request to:  
Zion@newbc.rr.com
- ⇒ Occasionally reminders and/or the weekly announcement sheet is sent via email. If you have not received any of these messages and would like to, please email your request to:  
Zion@newbc.rr.com

If you have information to be shared with Zion, please submit it to: Zion@newbc.rr.com The submission deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 21st of every month. The submission deadline for the weekly announcements is every Monday.



# A Colorful New Life

In baptism we get a new life from God. Bring this picture to life by coloring in by the numbers.



**Kid's Activity!**

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**Going Where Jesus Leads**



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Bishop Katherine Finegan  
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**[www.nglsynod.org](http://www.nglsynod.org)**

**Equipping the Saints for Ministry**



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**God's work. Our hands.**