“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful” (Colossians 3:15).

Friends,

Since last week, the news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has filled news reports and social media feeds. Heartbreaking images of people saying goodbye to loved ones and lining up at the borders to leave the country are occupying our screens. Prayers and calls for peace are coming from around the world as we watch this crisis unfold.

 Civilians fleeing the violence are heading toward Ukraine’s western districts and such neighboring countries as Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. Ukrainian men of military age (18-60) are required to stay in the country, so most of those fleeing the violence are women and children. According to one report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 500,000 people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries including Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Moldova. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter and such basic necessities as food, water and toiletries. Care for people also includes pastoral and psychological support to address the trauma they’ve endured.
Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companion churches in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as the Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water and hygiene kits. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has joined other religious leaders from Europe and around the globe in issuing an interfaith call for peace in the region.

Your gifts will support Ukrainians and others. Gifts to “Eastern Europe Crisis Response” will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by the crisis in Ukraine and neighboring countries.

Our prayers abound for the loss and devastation experienced in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

Please give now

In Christ’s service,

The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Trauma in our Bodies and Brains
Free Zoom Class Recording Sponsored by the Montana Synod ELCA and NRIT
Because this topic and information was especially helpful for participants of the live class, we decided to provide the recording to interested participants until March 25th. Access the two-hour recording by registering on the NRIT page of the synod website.

Part one: Trauma in our Bodies and Brains: What is trauma and how does it impact us?
Part two: Post-traumatic Growth: Not all trauma stops us in our tracks. Some of us actually grow from trauma. Learn about the areas of post-traumatic growth, and think about how you might build them in yourselves, your families and your congregants.

Taught by Dr. Betsy Stone, a retired clinical psychologist who currently teaches as an adjunct lecturer at HUC-JIR, teaching pastoral and developmental topics in the School of Education.

Go to the Montana Synod website: www.montanasynod.org. Scroll down to the blue NRIT (Northern Rockies Institute of Theology) logo and click, then find this item on the NRIT page. After registering, you will receive the link in order to view the recording. Contact Jenny Kunka at j.kunka@nrit.org or 406-396-1398 with questions.
Time to register for the Chico Hot Springs Pastoral Conference!

Click here to go to the registration page and to find out speaker and registration info, as well as instructions on how to make sure you have a room at Chico!

Thrivent sponsored course

What if you could pick how much you pay in taxes? Would you do it? Be mindful that tax rules will change over time and that such changes have the potential to adversely affect you.

There are also special tax advantages for clergy related to their housing allowance, which can continue into retirement with a church sponsored 403(b). If you transfer that 403(b) into an IRA or other account, you may lose that housing benefit.

Then there’s Social Security. Some church leaders opt out of Social Security; however, the IRS has strict rules for opting out.

Churches and ministers face unique tax considerations. Join us for a discussion of key issues and considerations with Rob Faulk from CapinCrouse, including:

- Who qualifies as a minister for the purposes of taxation?
- What to know about the minister’s housing allowance?
- Common W-2 issues
- And more

Thursday, March 10, 2022
11 - 12 p.m. Central Time

REGISTER NOW →

We hope you can join us online. If you know other pastors or ministry leaders who may benefit from this discussion, please forward this email to them!
from this event, please forward this invitation to them.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about Thrivent’s resources for churches, please contact goodsteward@thrivent.com.

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**Upcoming FLBC Retreats**

**Peer Ministry Leadership Training with Lyle Griner**  
*April 1-2, 2022 (Fri - Sat with options to attend all or part of the event, and options to extend your stay!) $100/person (Fri - Sat.); $85 for Saturday only*  
Join us April 1-2, 2022 for a Peer Ministry Leadership Training with Lyle Griner at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp! Peer ministry is about the practical life skill that empowers us to become Good Samaritan leaders who care for every neighbor, every day, everywhere in every relationship. This retreat is for adults and youth (Jr high and up). Bring a group from your congregation, scout troop, or come on your own! CEU credits available.

**Adult Education/Spirituality Retreat with Dr. Andrew Root**  
*May 1-3, 2022 225/person (entire event); Monday only: $175*  
Join us for this special retreat with Dr. Andrew Root, professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary. Expect insightful sessions such as “Living after a pandemic...why are we exhausted?” and time for fun and relaxation at camp, too - quiet time, reading time, worship, hikes, pottery, and great food. This retreat is for all adults. Pastors, LPA’s, Lay people, youth workers. CEU credits available.
A Journey of Re-visioning Our Relationships to the Land, Creation, and Each Other
Presented by: Faith and Climate Action Montana (in Missoula)

Invites people from all traditions and perspectives to a powerful book study:

*Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

5 sessions all on zoom, Monday nights from 7 – 8:30pm

March 14: “Planting” (pp. 3-62)
(Skip March 21 because of UM and Missoula spring break)
March 28: “Tending” (pp. 63-120)
April 4: “Picking” (pp. 121-204)
April 11: “Braiding” (pp. 205-302)
April 18: “Burning/Returning” (pp. 303-384)

Facilitators: Caleb Koeble, Rai Combs, Karin Cravin, Jim Hatley, and John Lund

Sign up here: [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d4FA9A82DA7FB6-braiding](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d4FA9A82DA7FB6-braiding)

Questions: Caleb Koeble caleb.koeble@umconnect.umt.edu, or call John 406-396-4974.

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