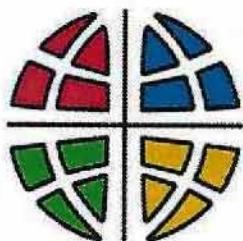


Holy Communion *with* Rite of Ordination

January 17, 2026 • 2:00 p.m.
United Lutheran Church
Oak Park, Illinois



Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

+ GATHERING +

PRELUDE

INVITATION AND CALL TO THE ANCESTORS

The assembly may rise in body or spirit.

GATHERING SONG

Come, We That Love The Lord



1 Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known;
2 Let those re - fuse to sing who nev - er knew our God;
3 The hill of Zi - on yields a thou-sand sa - cred sweets
4 Then let our songs a-bound, and ev - 'ry tear be dry;



join in a song with sweet ac - cord, join in a song with
but chil - dren of the heav'n - ly King, but chil - dren of the
be - fore we reach the heav'n - ly fields, be - fore we reach the
we're march - ing through Im - man - uel's ground, we're march - ing through Im -



sweet ac - cord and thus sur - round the throne, and thus sur-round the throne,
heav'n-ly King may tell their joys a-broad, may tell their joys a - broad.
heav'n-ly fields, or walk the gold - en streets, or walk the gold - en streets.
man-uel's ground, to fair - er worlds on high, to fair - er worlds on high.

Refrain



We're march-ing to Zi - on, beau - ti-ful, beau - ti-ful Zi - on:



we're march-ing up-ward to Zi - on, the beau - ti-ful cit-y of God.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

ELW Setting 7

¡Gloria, gloria, gloria en las alturas a Dios!
Glo-ria, gloria, glo-ria, glo-ry to God . . . on high!

¡Gloria, gloria, gloria en las alturas a Dios!
Glo-ria, gloria, glo-ria, glo-ry to God . . . on high!

Y en la tierra paz para que llos que amel Se - ñor.
And on earth . . . peace to God's peo-ple. Glo - ry to God.

Y en la tierra paz para que llos que amel Se - ñor.
And on earth . . . peace to God's peo-ple. Glo - ry to God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray... Almighty and merciful God, you built your church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and you instituted the office of the ministry of word and sacrament so that the apostolic and prophetic work might continue throughout the ages.

Grant that Timothy Colon-Geistlinger, Sharei Green and Rodger Jones, now to be ordained, may carry out this ministry faithfully in the power of your Spirit; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.



+ WORD +

Please be seated.

SCRIPTURE READING – *Isaiah 49:1-7*

¹ Listen to me, O coastlands;
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The LORD called me before I was born;
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
³ And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the LORD
and my reward with my God."
⁵ And now the LORD says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength –

⁶ he says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

⁷ Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
"Kings shall see and stand up;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 40:1-11

Read responsively.

¹ I waited patiently for the Lord;
who stooped to me and heard my cry.
² The Lord drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.

³ The Lord put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the Lord.

⁴ Happy are those who trust in the Lord,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.

⁵ You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.

Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

⁶ Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

⁷ Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."

⁹ I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.

¹⁰ I have not hidden your saving help within my heart;
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

¹¹ Do not, O Lord, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind ⁶ just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly may rise in body or in spirit.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW Setting 7

*jA - le - lu - ya,
Al - le - lu - ia,
a - le - lu - ya,
al - le - lu - ia!*

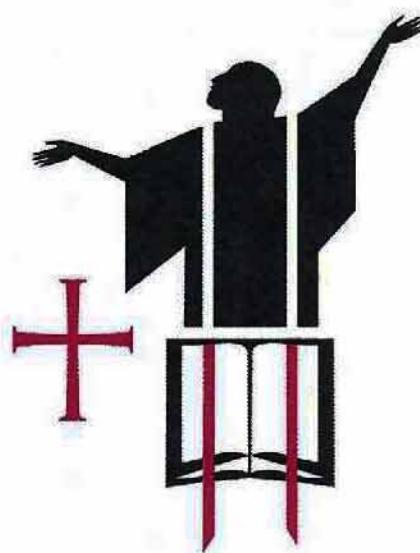
*a - le - lu - ya!
al - le - lu - ia!*

*a - le - lu - ya,
al - le - lu - ia,
a - le - lu - ya,
al - le - lu - ia,*

*a - le - lu - ya!
al - le - lu - ia!*

*jA - le - - lu - ya!
Al - le - - lu - ia!*

*a - le - lu - ya!
al - le - lu - ia!*



GOSPEL - John 1:29-42

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord!

²⁹ [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One."

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). ⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

A brief silence.

The assembly rises in body or in spirit.

HYMN OF THE DAY *All Who are Thirsty*

All who are thirsty, all who are weak, come to the fountain.

Dip your heart in the stream of life. Let the pain and the sor - row be wash'd a - way in the waves of His mer - cy as deep cries out to deep. (We sing)

Come, Lord Je - sus, come. Come, Lord Je - sus, come.

Come, Lord Je - sus, come. Come, Lord Je - sus, come.

Last time to Coda ♂

31 come. All who are thirst Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

38 Ho - ly Spir - it, come. Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

45 Ho - ly Spir - it, come. As deep cries out to deep.

(1, 2)

As deep cries deep, we sing

ENDING

Come, Lord Je - sus, come.

+ ORDINATION +

PRESENTATION

I present for ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament Timothy Edward Colon-Geistlinger who has been prepared, examined, and approved for this ministry and who has been called by the church to this ministry through Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Glenview, Illinois.

Thanks be to God!

I present for ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament Sharei Green who has been prepared, examined, and approved for this ministry and who has been called by the church to this ministry through United in Faith Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois.

Thanks be to God!

I present for ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament Rodger Jones who has been prepared, examined, and approved for this ministry and who has been called by the church to this ministry through Bethel Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois.

Thanks be to God!

The assembly is seated.

ADDRESS AND QUESTIONS

The presiding minister addresses the candidates.

All baptized Christians are called to share in Christ's ministry of love and ...
Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things,
graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The assembly rises in body or spirit for the prayers of intercession

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

At the close of each prayer petition, the assembly may respond:

Transforming God, receive our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers.

All that we pray, you hear. All that we need, you provide. Unite us with those for whom we pray and make us one people, in your holy name. Amen.

The assembly is seated. The candidates may kneel. Rostered ministers are invited to individually share a blessing for each candidate.

HYMN OF INVOCATION

Waymaker

Osinachi Okoro

You are here, moving in our midst,
I worship you, I worship You.
You are here, working in this place,
I worship you, I worship you.

Hey, way maker, miracle worker,
Promise keeper, light in the darkness.
My God, that is who You are.
Hey, way maker, miracle worker,
Promise keeper, light in the darkness.
My God, that is who You are.

You are here, touching every heart,
I worship you, I worship you.
You are here, healing every heart,
I worship you, I worship you.

You are here, turning lives around,
I worship you, I worship you.
You are here, mending every heart,
I worship you, I worship you.

Hey, way maker, miracle worker,
Promise keeper, light in the darkness.
My God, that is who You are.
Hey, way maker, miracle worker,
Promise keeper, light in the darkness.
My God, that is who You are.

You wipe away all tears,
You mend the broken heart.
You're the answer to it all, Jesus.

You are here, touching every life,
I worship you, I worship you.
You are here, meeting every need,
I worship you, I worship you.

1. Oh let the Son of God en - fold you with His Spir - it and His
 2. Oh come and sing this song with glad - ness as your hearts are filled with

love: Let Him fill your heart and sat - is - fy your soul. Oh let Him
 joy: Lift your hands in sweet sur - ren - der to His name. Oh give Him

have those things that hold you, and His Spir - it like, a dove, will des - cend up - on your
 all your tears and sad - ness; Give Him all your years of pain, and you'll en - ter in - to

life and make you whole. Je - sus, oh Je - sus.
 life in Je - sus' name.

come and fill Your lambs. Je - sus, oh Je -

sus, come and fill Your lambs.

THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal...
for their work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the head of the candidate. Following a time of silent prayer, the presiding minister continues, praying for the candidate in turn.

Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Timothy Edward Colon-Geistlinger... through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Sharei Green...through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Rodger Jones... through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

GIVING OF A STOLE

Receive this stole as a sign of your work, and live in obedience to the Lord Jesus, serving his people and remembering his promise: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." *(Matthew 11:28-30)*

CHARGE

Sharei, Rodger, and Timothy, care for God's people, bear their burdens, and do not betray their confidence. So discipline yourself in life and teaching that you preserve the truth, giving no occasion for false security or illusory hope. Witness faithfully in word and deed to all people. Give and receive comfort as you serve within the church. And be of good courage, for God has called you, and your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

BLESSING

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The assembly is invited to rise in body or in spirit.

ACCLAMATION BY THE ASSEMBLY

Will you, assembled as the people of God and speaking for the whole church, receive Sharei, Timothy, and Rodger as messengers of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve all people with the gospel of hope and salvation?

Will you regard them as a servant of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Will you pray for Rodger, Timothy, and Sharei, help and honor them for their work's sake, and in all things, strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Let it be acclaimed that Timothy Edward Colon-Geistlinger is a called and ordained minister of word and sacrament in the church of Christ. Timothy has Christ's authority to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments, serving God's people as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Let it be acclaimed that Sharei Green is a called and ordained minister of word and sacrament in the church of Christ. Sharei has Christ's authority to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments, serving God's people as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Let it be acclaimed that Rodger Jones is a called and ordained minister of word and sacrament in the church of Christ. Rodger has Christ's authority to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments, serving God's people as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

The assembly may offer acclamation with applause.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

OFFERING

Thank you for your faithful commitment to build up the church by supporting these candidates for ordination. Today's offering supports scholarships for first call leaders to synod events for first call pastors, such as Rostered Ministers Gathering in this fall. You can make a donation through cash, check to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod or using the QR code. Thank you for your generosity.



OFFERING MUSIC

The Lord's Prayer

OFFERTORY

Welcome Table

TFF #263

1 I'm a-goin'-a eat at the wel-come ta - ble,
2 I'm a-goin'-a feast on milk . . and hon - ey,
3 I'm a-goin'-a wade 'cross Jor - dan's riv - er,

I'm a-goin'-a eat at the wel-come ta - ble, some of these days.
I'm a-goin'-a feast on milk . . and hon - ey, some of these days.
I'm a-goin'-a wade 'cross Jor - dan's riv - er, some of these days.

I'm a-goin'-a eat at the wel-come ta - ble,
I'm a-goin'-a feast on milk . . and hon - ey,
I'm a-goin'-a wade 'cross Jor - dan's riv - er,

I'm goin' - a eat at the wel-come ta - ble, some of these days.
I'm goin' - a feast on . . milk and hon - ey, some of these days.
I'm goin' - a wade 'cross . . Jor - dan's riv - er, some of these days.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

+ MEAL +

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should ...

praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW Setting 6

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow - er and might,

heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,

we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

PADRENUESTRO

Padre nuestro que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu nombre.
Venga tu reino Hágase tu voluntad
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
Perdona nuestras ofensas como
también nosotros
perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.
No nos dejes caer en tentación y
líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino, tuyo es el
poder y tuya es la gloria,
ahora y siempre. Amén.

COMMUNION INVITATION

LAMB OF GOD

ELW Setting 6

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Today's communion elements include gluten-free host, red wine, and white grape juice, to expand the welcome to Jesus' table. Please place the empty cups in the containers before returning to your seats, and please alert the ushers or communion servers for those who wish to receive communion from their seats.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

I Know It Was the Blood

TFF #75

1 I know it was the blood,
2 It was my Sav-ior's blood,
3 They pierced him in his side,
4 He's com - ing back a - gain,

I know it was the blood,
it was my Sav-ior's blood,
they pierced him in his side,
he's com - ing back a - gain,

I know it was the blood
for me.
it was my Sav-ior's blood
for me.
they pierced him in his side
for me.
he's com - ing back a - gain
for me.

One day when I was lost,
One day when I was lost,
One day when I was lost,
One day when I was lost,

he died up-on the cross.
he died up-on the cross.
he died up-on the cross.
he died up-on the cross.

I know it was the blood
for me.
It was my Sav-ior's blood
for me.
They pierced him in his side
for me.
He's com - ing back a - gain
for me.

Here I Am, Lord

ELW #574

1. "I, the Lord of sea and sky,
2. "I, the Lord of snow and rain,
3. "I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I have heard my peo - ple cry.

I have borne my peo - ple's pain.
I will tend the poor and lame.

All who dwell in dark and sin
I have wept for love of them.
I will set a feast for them.

my hand will save.
They turn a - way.
My hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night,
I will break their hearts of stone,
Fin-est bread I will pro-vide

I will make their dark-ness bright.
give them hearts for love a - lone.
till their hearts be sat - is - fied.

Who will bear my light to them?
I will speak my word to them.
I will give my life to them.

Whom shall I send?"
Whom shall I send?"
Whom shall I send?"

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you

call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you

lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

The blood that Jesus shed for me
Way back on Calvary
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its pow'r

Chorus: It reaches to the highest mountain
It flows to the lowest valley
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its pow'r

It soothes my doubt and calms my fears
And it dries all my tears
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its pow'r

Chorus: It reaches to the highest mountain
It flows to the lowest valley
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its pow'r

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

+ SENDING +

BLESSING



SENDING SONG *We are Marching in the Light of God* ELW #866

Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha -
 We are march - ing in the light of God, we are march - ing in the

nyen' kwen - khos'. Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos',
 light of God. We are march - ing in the light of God,

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos',
 we are march - ing in the light of God.

Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) oo
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) oo

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
 we are march - ing in the light of God.

Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) oo
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) oo

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
 we are march - ing in the light of God.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to do justice and love mercy. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

SERVING IN THE LITURGY

SIRVIENDO EN LA LITURGIA

**The Rev. Wayne Miller, Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Presiding Minister | Obispo, Ministro Presidiendo**

Ms. Yvette Newberry White
Assisting Minister | Ministro Asistente

The Rev-Elect Timothy Edward Colon-Geistlinger
The Rev-Elect Sharei Green
The Rev-Elect Rodger Jones
Ordinands | Ordenados

The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock
The Rev. Dr. Larry Clark, *St. Mark Lutheran Church*
Rev. Erin Coleman-Branchaud, *St. Luke Lutheran Church*
The Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Dixon, *Jubilee Faith Community*
Rev. Julie Ryan & Mr. Mark Van Scharrel, M. Div.
Ordination Sponsors | *Padrinos y Madrinas de Ordinación*

Rozella H. White, Emily Moertmann, Phyllis Geistlinger
Lectors | Lectores

Kevin Copeland, *Bethel Lutheran Church*
Sam Widemon, *Bethel Lutheran Church*
Dr. Cacie Miller, *United Lutheran Church, Oak Park*
Musicians | Músico

Terry Henderson

Emily Moentmann, Rozella H. White
Communion Servers

A special thank you to Pastor Ole Schenk, the staff and members of United Lutheran Church for their wonderful and gracious hospitality! Especially our ushers and our Worship Tech Team!

The Rev. Christina Klein, Mr. Matt Haider, The Rev. Charisse Jensen,

The Rev. Nathan Klein, Vicar Alex Linn

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Worship Team | Comité de Liturgia del Sínodo

ORDAINED THIS DAY

Timothy Edward Colon-Geistlinger (he/him) graduated with his Masters of Divinity in 2025 from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. A lifelong member of the ELCA, he was baptized and confirmed at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint Luke in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago, where he served as Sacristan while working through seminary. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Theater from Elmhurst University, and has backgrounds in music and the culinary arts.

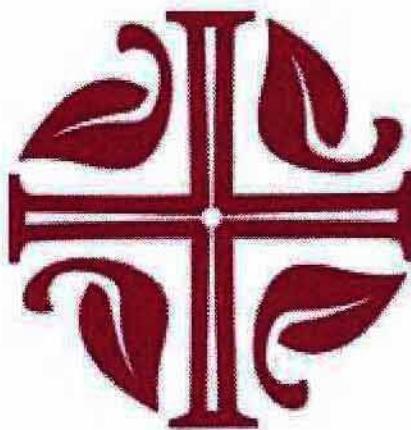
He is passionate about sharing the love of Jesus through worship, fellowship, service, study of Scripture and sacred tradition. He enjoys traveling with his wife, Emmy, and spending time with his family and lifelong friends in the city he loves.

Sharei Green (she/her) is a Chicago native with a Business Management degree from Luther College. A Womanist theologian with an MDiv from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Sharei lives at the intersection of fat, Black, queer, woman and neurodivergent. She is the co-author of God's Holy Darkness, a children's book that celebrates the holiness of darkness and deconstructs anti-Blackness in Christian theology.

When she's off the clock, you can find her cooking, reading, or happily nerding out over D&D actual-play shows.

Rodger L. Jones (he/him) is a lifelong member of Bethel Lutheran Church in Chicago, Illinois, where he now serves as the Synod-Authorized Minister, answering God's call to lead the very congregation that nurtured his faith from childhood. Formed in the rich tradition of the Black Church and grounded in Lutheran theology, Rodger brings a powerful, Spirit-filled preaching voice, deep pastoral compassion, and a strong commitment to justice, community engagement, and transformational leadership. His ministry reflects a deep love for the people of God and a passion for proclaiming the Gospel in ways that speak directly to the lived realities of the community.

Rodger completed the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program through Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, faithfully preparing for ordained ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Having completed the candidacy process and received approval for ordination, he steps into this sacred moment with humility and gratitude for the mentors, synod leaders, and congregation who have walked alongside him. Rodger remains committed to equipping leaders to serve boldly in their God-given gifts and to bearing witness to the liberating love, hope, and power of Jesus Christ.



Libations is a ritual that recognizes and shows respect for our ancestors, those who paved the way and those yet to come. Libations assist us in developing a sense of community, a connection with our history and culture, a sense of being part of something bigger than ourselves, and a feeling of connectedness with our future. Soil, the earth, symbolizes our home (for those transplanted). Water represents life and baptism. The leaves point in all directions.

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