

FALL THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

September 7-10, 2025

Fair Hills Resort + Detroit Lakes, MN

Living Interconnected: Theology of the Cross in this Time of Disconnect

Session 1: Interconnectedness: Divine Invitation

Session 2: Falling Short: Barriers to Interconnection

Session 3: Living Interconnected in a Disconnected World

God created the seas and the sky, vegetation and living creatures, and humankind to live in reciprocity (fully integrated, nontransactional interconnectedness). What does this mean for people of faith living in a seemingly disconnected world? Join us to explore the answer to this question. Gathering in retreat for renewal, we will dive into how God reveals interconnection through scripture, creation, and culture. We will explore some of the barriers that tend to prevent us from freely experiencing the beauty of God's fully integrated world as well as ways we, as God's people, are invited to live interconnected in the midst of disconnect. Our time together will be grounded in story, reflection, and discernment as to how God equips us to be hope in action through the promise of resurrection and new life for a hurting world.



Deacon Colleen Bernu (Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa) grew up on her family's dairy farm in northwestern Wisconsin and now lives on the Fond Du Lac Indian Reservation. Before answering God's call into the Ministry of Word and Service, Deacon Colleen worked as a teacher in rural districts of northeastern Minnesota, utilizing her degrees in Biology and Mathematics education. Colleen is dedicated to using her training and experience as a teacher and a deacon to bridge diverse communities through increased understanding, shared language, and mutual dialog. In the ELCA, Deacon Colleen has served as mission developer for Together Here Ministries and later DEM and Minister for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Northeastern Minnesota Synod. In her home community, she continues to stand as a youth mentor and cultural resource for those working to reclaim traditional understanding of what it means to live in reciprocity in this world. Her professional experiences combined with her experiences as an Ojibwe woman offers her a unique perspective through which to interpret and articulate living interconnected in a divided world.



Rev. Beth Pottratz lives outside of Motley, MN with her husband and 4 children, 3 dogs, and two dozen chickens. She is currently a stay-at-home mom and the EcoFaith Network Communication Coordinator for the Northeastern MN and St. Paul Area synods creation care ministries. Before her call to ministry, Beth was a YAGM in Uruguay and Spanish teacher in Minneapolis. Since her graduation from Luther Seminary in 2016, Beth has served as a called pastor, contracted pastor, pulpit supply, and as a hospice chaplain. In 2019, Beth completed a two-year Rural Ministry fellowship for clergy at the Collegeville Ecumenical Institute, St. Joseph, MN. Since January 2025, as the EcoFaith Communication Coordinator, Beth has first-hand experience at living out care of Creation work at the congregational, synodical and regional levels.

About our Retreat Chaplain



Rev. Sonja Kjar has worked in various ministry settings in the Eastern ND synod for many (almost 30) years and is currently on the Retired Pastor's roster while still working in grief support at a Fargo funeral home. At Fairhills she will be available for conversation, pastoral care and connecting about ministry or personal matters.