



CONFERENCE ON
WORSHIP, THEOLOGY, AND THE ARTS



NOURISHING
VOCATION

The Nourishing Vocation Project and The Nourishing Vocation with Children projects are committed to providing resources, support, and information to help you and your congregation thrive.

Newsletter for Lent, Easter 2026

We are delighted to bring you this issue of the Communication on Worship, Theology, and the Arts Newsletter, which contains important registration information for the upcoming CWTA event, resources for Lent, and other important information. Enjoy!

With Joy and Hope - We Sing!

We always look forward with excitement and joy to the opening of CWTA registration. Because of the tragic events of our world, we find ourselves with heavy hearts, and we imagine the same might be true for you.

Amid these days and times, we are reminded of the words of Walter Brueggemann from the 2013 Festival of Homiletics. In his address to that gathering, he spoke of the Psalms, and he said, **"God's people sing in defiance of the data. Always."** He then went on to explain that the data of the world often gives us no cause to sing, and God's people sing anyway - in praise, in lamentation, in supplication, in teaching, and even in calls for judgment – God's people sing. How is this possible, and why do we sing? As the beloved people of God, we sing because fundamentally we believe that in all things and in everything, God is faithful, therefore, we hope. ***In that hope, we sing.***

It is covered in this hope that we are pleased to announce that registration is open for the 2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts: Nourishing Vocation – Every Time + Every Age + Every Place. This summer, we invite you to gather together with us for a holy time to renew our spirits, find joy in community, and remind each other that through our hope in God, we are not doing this work alone.

See the details in the following section, and join us for a chance to refill your spiritual cup, so that together we may run with perseverance the race set before us, and continue to show up for one another as God's holy and lifegiving presence in every time, every age, and every place.

CWTA 2026 - PLENARY SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED AND REGISTRATION OPEN

WHAT IS CWTA?

The 2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts (CWTA) is a high-quality, affordable conference,



NOURISHING
VOCATION

EVERY TIME * EVERY AGE * EVERY PLACE

full of practical ideas that you can adapt to your own setting, along with meaningful worship experiences — for ministry practitioners and by ministry practitioners. It will be held **July 20-22, 2026**.

WHY ATTEND CWTA?

CWTA offers essential professional development for anyone seeking fresh, innovative, and imaginative ways to thrive in both life and ministry today. Former participants have said:

"The plenary sessions were particularly impactful, giving language to what it means to be truly nourished."

"I loved the worship services. They fed my soul. The preaching, music, and prayers all came together to be meaningful."

"I'm deeply grateful for the lifting up of voices that have been underrepresented and undervalued in our church's history. I'm also deeply grateful for the great focus on the arts--musical, visual, oral and written word."

"It is so nice to be in worship and not have to lead, and hear so many wonderful sermons and music."

"Clarifying my call...and my why."

"I was nourished deeply by the excellent preaching at each worship service, which opened my heart and mind to see new ways the Holy Spirit is at work in me, calling and feeding; and in the world, which is so broken."

"As a pastor I say, thank you for feeding my spirit!"

"The worship experiences. They were rich, well crafted, varied, and modeled terrific worship leadership. They also offered a wonderful banquet of musical treasures."

WHO SHOULD ATTEND CWTA?

The conference attracts participants from many different roles, including: Experienced and first-call Pastors, Deacons, and other church professional leaders; Lay people including lay leaders; Church Workers – volunteer and paid; Children Youth and Family Ministers/Leaders; Artists; Church Musicians; Christian Education Professionals; Outdoor Ministry Professionals; Seminarians; Others interested in deepening theological understandings and spiritual practices; and Members of congregations that are reimagining their vocation. **We'll provide opportunities for you to find those people at the conference so you can connect and share experiences.**

WHO IS SPEAKING AT CWTA?

In keeping with the theme of Every Time, Every Age, and Every Place, plenary sessions will feature three wonderful young adults in the church:

Elizabeth Schoen- Every Time

Jessica Gulseth- Every Age

David Larson-Martínez- Every Place

Our What Nourishes You? Luncheon will feature [Amy Lindemann Allen](#).

In addition to plenary sessions and What Nourishes You, the breakout sessions (we call them **Spotlight Sessions**) are rich, diverse, and full of practical ideas you can adopt to your context. Participants will select their Spotlight Session choices when registering for the conference, so please review the list [here](#). Please [go here](#) to see the biographies of all of our presenters.

Details on the full schedule of CWTA can be found [here](#).

IT SOUNDS GREAT – HOW DO I REGISTER?

We are delighted to announce that registration for CWTA is open! Full conference registration is \$380 per person, which includes all programming and meals. Single day registration is available for \$130. Housing is available on campus starting at \$120 or you are welcome to explore the hotels in Northfield.

<https://stolaf.wufoo.com/forms/2026-conference-on-worship-theology-the-arts/>

The early-bird registration deadline is May 15 so make plans to register early!

WANT MORE? CONSIDER THE EVENT AHEAD OF CWTA: NOURISHING THE SPIRIT RETREAT

We are excited to announce a new offering at CWTA 2026! For those looking for an additional opportunity to rest and reset, we invite you to join us for **“Nourishing the Spirit”, a pre-conference spiritual renewal retreat July 17-19.** Programming will include worship services, time in nature, opportunities to attend Lutheran Summer Music’s rich concert offerings, time to rest, and more. Registration is \$300 per person which includes housing, meals, and programming. This is an intimate retreat and will be capped at 12 participants, so act fast if you would like to attend. More about the retreat [here](#) and [Register here](#).

INTERESTED IN BEING AN EXHIBITOR?

Building on record attendance at CWTA 2024, the 2026 conference will once again feature robust opportunities for exhibitors to connect with participants. Several sessions are scheduled to take place adjacent to exhibitor spaces on July 20 and 21, including a ministry and exhibitor fair, to ensure strong visibility and engagement.

Registration for exhibit spaces will open by February 2! Additional details regarding table pricing and logistics can be found on our [website](#). For questions, please contact Kristin Kivell at kivell1@stolaf.edu or 507-786-3092.

LOVE CWTA? CONSIDER BECOMING A SPONSOR!

We have received questions about how participants can financially support the mission of CWTA. If you feel called to do so, we invite you to consider providing a sponsorship. Sponsorships can be designated in a number of different ways, including:

- Scholarships to subsidize conference participation for others
- Sessions, speakers, or supplies (such as music)
- Worship
- The conference in general

As always, we are grateful for your prayers, for all who will come together in July, the planning teams, and CWTA. If interested in sponsorship, please email us at cwta@stolaf.edu.

WANT TO STAY UP-TO-DATE? Follow our [Facebook page](#)

“St Olaf Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts.”

Information also will be made available via this Newsletter and email. If you have questions, please email cwta@stolaf.edu.



Lent Resources

New for 2026! On Our Way: Stories of Transformation, Healing, and Hope

The gospel tells one story again and again: God meets people where they are and moves them toward life. Those pushed to the edges—silenced, dismissed, or wounded—are drawn from the margins to the mission, becoming bearers of the good news themselves. Those who once opposed God's work are turned from persecutor to proclaim. Those who pass by in fear or self-justification are awakened from indifference and opened to mercy. Those shaped by scarcity and self-protection are freed from greed and moved to generosity. And those caught in estrangement and loss are raised from death to life, named as God's own, and restored to wholeness, communion, and joy. In every case, God does not simply forgive; God transforms, heals, and brings hope, sending people, renewed and reoriented, into God's work in the world.

Lent Year A resources - a series of Engaging The Living Words sermon ideas and Near and Now studies for the texts of Year A.

Broken and Beloved - a series of resources including liturgies, monologues, sermons and others featuring various characters in the Bible

We are never just one thing, and oftentimes, the very essence of who we are can seem like opposites. Martin Luther said that we are simultaneously saint and sinner. Two different things, opposites, both true at the same time.

Lent is an especially good time to reflect upon such things, to consider and wonder about what it means that within our very selves, we are more than one thing at any given time.

Promises at the Crossroads of History and Hope - a series of Engaging The Living Words, Near and Now Studies, Liturgies and Monologues

The season of Lent affords a unique opportunity to prayerfully consider this crossroads of history and hope. It invites us to reflect upon who and what we have been – and point to Christ – promise fulfilled, love incarnate, and hope embodied for the sake of the whole world.

Holy Trinity Sunday: Ideas, Imagination, and Inspiration

Ever wonder what to do for Holy Trinity Sunday? You're not alone. Join Pastors Leta Behrens, Emily Dalen, and Brigitte Weir—who bring decades of combined experience in intergenerational ministry — for a 90-minute webinar designed to spark imagination and ease the planning load. Together we'll explore sermon prompts, children's messages, creative liturgy ideas, and practical planning and logistics — everything you need to approach Holy Trinity Sunday with confidence and joy. Zoom in on **April 21st from 2:00-3:30 CST** at the link below.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 943 6901 3672

Passcode: Luther1517

Looking for NVP or NVC Resources?

Near and Now Discussion Group Studies

In addition to the [Near and Now Bible Studies](#), we have started to create a library of [Near and Now Discussion Group Studies](#) based on texts other than the Bible. These texts have themes of faith, theology, and living in the world. Our first studies were created by our students.

Check out our Resource Corner TODAY! NVP and NVC staff have developed a lot of resources and want to make sure they are available to you. Our team recently redesigned a website so users can easily locate any of the NVP or NVC resources you want to review or request. This includes the Celebrate! Liturgies, Near and Now Bible Studies, Wonders of Worship (WOW); Elemental Ministry, Young at Heart and much more! Examples of how these resources are being used to help congregations thrive are being added daily. Find the new page [Here](#).

Student Article “Faith and the Rise of Generative AI”

Wondering how faith, theology, and Generative AI intersect? Check out the blog post by NVP Fellow David Thomas '29 on [Faith and Generative AI](#). Discussion questions are included to enhance your personal reflection and small group conversations.

Closing Thoughts

Beloved children of Christ, through our hope in God, we proclaim that God is making all things new, even in such a time as this. May we practice this hope throughout our lives, allowing our feet to be pointed and our hands to be guided to do God's will. May we remember our cloud of witnesses, and be comforted that we do not walk alone. May the God of hope hold you, protect you, and bless you as you go about your days.