

# Keynote & Workshop Descriptions

## Fall 2023 Synod Assembly

### Keynote

7:00pm on Tuesday, October 17th

### Workshops

Tuesday, October 17th at 1:00pm and 3:00pm

Wednesday, October 18th at 10:00am

### **Keynote: Hope in Liminal Time - Mark Sundby**

According to Jim Wallis of Sojourners Magazine, Hope is “believing in spite of the evidence and then watching the evidence change.” It can be a nebulous, elusive concept. Yet, the scriptures repeatedly identify hope as central to our walk as Christians, and the psychological literature finds it’s a key to our well-being. In this talk, Mark will take a psychological lens to understand how hope can ground us in turbulent times and, most importantly, how we can actively cultivate it. When we daily live by hope, we will become purveyors of hope to our congregations and communities and “watch the evidence change.”

#### **Bio info:**

Mark is a United Methodist minister and psychologist. For the past 23 years, as executive director (and now co-director) of LeaderWise, he has specialized in personality and leadership assessment, emphasizing health and wholeness, conflict skills training, and leadership development. The center contracts with businesses, denominations, and seminaries across North America and meets with a couple of thousand individuals each year to provide coaching, career counseling, psychotherapy, ministry assessments, and an array of other leadership development services.

# Workshops

## Tuesday, October 17th - 1:00pm

### Dispatches from the Margins: 5 Things the Church Can Learn from our Newest Worshipping Communities - Nikki Collins

Since 2012, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has worked to ignite a movement across the denomination to start new communities of worship and witness. Over 750 groups have begun to gather in ways and among neighbors we had never really explored. So what are we learning? How can what they are doing and discovering help existing congregations follow the Spirit in their own unique and faithful ways?

#### **Bio info:**

Nikki Collins began serving as the Coordinator for 1001 New Worshipping Communities in June 2018. Previously she served Cherokee Presbytery as Stated Clerk and Mission Coordinator and, before that, as the founder of Bare Bulb Coffee, a rich brew of full-service coffee shop, music and arts venue, and home to a diverse group of disciples committed to shedding light in the world. She graduated with a degree in psychology and religion from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia and earned her M.Div at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

### Resetting the Table - Kristy Rodgers

From the dining table to the halls of Congress, we are finding it harder and harder to have conversations about hard things. Recognizing the need, this year, the Synod made a significant investment in training a group of folks to help individuals, congregations, and Presbyteries engage those challenging, often divisive, topics in meaningful, healing ways. Come see if what they've learned could help you in your context!

#### **Bio info:**

Kristy Rodgers is a Commissioned Pastor in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, current Synod Coordinating Team Chair, and member of the synod's Network for Dismantling Racism. Married to John for 33 years, with three grown sons, she is forever trying to find better, kinder, more effective ways to communicate with people, with varying degrees of success.

# Workshops

## Tuesday, October 17th - 3:00pm

### Workshop: Resilience for Weary Leaders - Mark Sundby

re·sil·ience | \ ri-'zil-yən(t)s: the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

For many of us we've experienced the "compressive stress" of world events as they've hit close to home over the past several years, and several of us have witnessed firsthand the "deformation" of our churches and communities by these pressures. Perhaps we've even experienced a deformation of sorts within ourselves at times. Despite our weariness, how can we recover the "size and shape" of our ministries - to rediscover our call anew?

Drawing upon the psychological research of resilience and his work with church leaders across denominations, Mark will share his observations about burnout, grief, and isolation among people in ministry - and tangible steps to heal, recover, and lead with resilience despite it all.

### Cultivating Stillness in Chaos - Lillian Smith

We will explore and practice stillness in the mind and body when we become aware of the chaos in and around us. Why? Tending your body had a direct bearing on tending the Body of Christ.

#### **Bio info:**

Lil Smith, DMin, is a Minister of Word and Sacrament in Grace Presbytery. Her role in validated ministry is adjunct faculty at Perkins School of Theology/SMU teaching spiritual direction and formation. Her passion is holding space for others to discovery Holy Mystery in daily life.

# Workshops

## Wednesday, October 18th - 10:00am

### **UKirk: The Changing Landscape of Campus Ministry - Mini Norris-Lane**

In this workshop, participants will learn about the impact UKirk network ministries are making throughout the Synod of the Sun, learn what Gen Z students are looking for in faith communities, and explore ways congregations and presbyteries can re-invest in ministries with and to college students and young adults.

#### **Bio info:**

Rev. Gini Norris-Lane is the executive director of the UKirk Collegiate Ministries Association, a 501c3 organization in covenant partnership with the PC(USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency that works with over 200 Presbyterian-connected college ministries throughout the nation.

Ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament since 1999, Norris-Lane has served most of her ministry within the bounds of the Synod of the Sun in San Antonio, Kerrville, and Uvalde, Texas. (With a 3-year stint in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta). She credits Rev. Frank Seaman for inviting her to apply for the campus ministry position at Schreiner University for introducing her to her life's work and passion.

### **Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR) - Kathy Lee-Cornell**

Wildfires, tornadoes, floods, hurricane, and other acts of destruction and violence have impacted our communities and congregations across the Synod. This workshop will provide insight into the vision behind the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery and the opportunities before us in connectational ministry to be bearers of hope during times of chaos and loss.

#### **Bio info:**

Kathy serves as the Director for the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR), a four-year pilot initiative of 11 presbyteries, the Synod of the Sun, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. A graduate of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the University of Texas School of Social Work, Kathy has served congregations and nonprofit organizations across Texas and Louisiana. Kathy and her husband, Alex, live in New Orleans with their two sons and a very senior dog named Thomas.