

Spring Learning Event 2026

April 16–18 | Girdwood Chapel, Girdwood, Alaska

Grounding Scripture: Psalm 16 – Second Week of Easter

“You show me the path of life.” (Psalm 16)

Overview

This Spring Learning Event gathers clergy and lay leaders for worship, learning, and shared discernment rooted in Easter hope. Guided by Psalm 16, our posture is one of simplicity, attentiveness, and trust in God’s unfolding path of life.

Participants may attend the full event **or register for individual sessions**, workshops, or discussions that best fit their role, interest, or availability. Several sessions are offered **hybrid (in person + virtual)** to encourage wider participation across the Conference.

Thursday, April 16 – Arrival & Orientation

Who Should Attend (Thursday):

Pastoral, lay, and conference leaders, council and committee chairs, and anyone involved in local church conferencing or discernment. This day is especially helpful for those wanting shared grounding, orientation, and connection at the start of the gathering.

Theme: Easter Welcome | Listening for the Path of Life

4:00–4:45 pm | Opening Worship

Psalm 16 | Easter Welcome

5:00–6:30 pm | Holy Conferencing (Hybrid)

Supporting Local Church Conferencing

Facilitators: Conference Administrator, Crystal Feaster & Conference Superintendent, Kristi McGuire

Ideal for: Pastoral Leaders, Lay Leaders, Council Chairs, those involved in church conferencing

6:45–8:00 pm | Dinner (On Site – Girdwood)

Hightower Pub

8:00–9:00 pm | Evening Fellowship Gatherings

Optional, informal connection

Friday, April 17 – Learning, Formation & Connection

Who Should Attend (Friday):

Pastoral and lay leaders seeking practical tools, formation, and conversation around structure, finances, vitality, grief, and leadership. Participants may attend individual workshops or join virtually for selected sessions.

Theme: Practice Seeing (ὁπάω)

9:30–10:00 am | Morning Devotional

Psalm 16 | Practice Seeing

Morning Workshops (Choose One)

10:15–11:45 am | Morning Workshops (Choose One) – 90 minutes (In Person)

Option A: Simplifying Local Church Structure

- Best Practices & Church Transitions

Ideal for: Clergy, council leaders, SPRC, administrative leaders

Option B: Grief Workshop

A facilitated space for those who have experienced loss

Ideal for: Clergy and lay leaders seeking pastoral and personal support

11:45 am–1:00 pm | Lunch & Fellowship

Afternoon Break-Out Groups (Register for One)

1:00–2:30 pm | Afternoon Break-Out Groups – 90 minutes (Register for One)

-  Time for Treasurers (Hybrid): Annual Financial Review Training

Ideal for: Treasurers, finance chairs, pastors

- **COLA & Minimum Compensation (In Person)**

Facilitator: David Means

Ideal for: Clergy, SPRC, finance teams

2:45–4:15 pm | Congregational Development & Vitality (In Person)

- Visioning & Strategy – Director of Connectional Ministries, Kristi McGuire
- Intercultural Competence – Assistant to the Bishop, Lisa Talbott

4:30–5:15 pm | Webinar: Apportionment Calculations (Hybrid)

Presenter: Brant Henshaw

Ideal for: Treasurers, pastors, finance leaders (may attend virtually only)

5:15–6:45 pm | Optional Nature Walk / Hike

6:45–8:00 pm | Dinners

- Laity Dinner (Location TBD)
 - Pastoral Leaders Dinner (Location TBD)
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Saturday, April 18 – Integration & Sending

Who Should Attend (Saturday):

Clergy, lay leaders, ministry partners, and those engaged in youth, equity, housing, candidacy, and justice-focused ministries. Saturday is well-suited for those joining for a single day of learning, reflection, and worship.

Theme: Sightings of Grace

🕊️ 9:30–10:00 am | Morning Devotional

Psalm 16 | Sightings of Grace

Morning Break-Out Groups (Register for One)

🕒 10:15–11:45 am | Morning Break-Out Groups – 90 minutes (Register for One)

- Youth & Young Adult Ministries – CCYYAM Chair - *Hybrid*
- Equity: Covenant for Conflict Management – Conference Superintendent, Kristi McGuire & Conference Lay Leader, Melanie Venables
- Housing & Hunger – Trusted Connections Leaders, Dan Wilcox - *Hybrid*
- Ministry Candidates / Professional Ministries Unit Restructuring – *In Person*

11:45 am–12:30 pm | Lunch & Fellowship

🕊️🌿 12:30–2:30 pm | Service & Reflection Projects

Practice Seeing (ópáw): Sightings of Grace

Participants reflect, record, and share where Christ is at work across ministries and communities.

🕊️ 3:00–4:00 pm | Closing Worship

Psalm 16 | Sending Forth

4:00 pm | Retreat Concludes
