



# CHRISTIANS AND A DIVIDED AMERICA

JANUARY 20, 25, 27  
FEBRUARY 3

Across the United States, the social, cultural, and political divide continues to grow – manifesting itself even at school board and city council meetings. Not only does it appear in the daily news, but branches of Christianity seem to reflect similar divisions. This series will ask: What should the role of Christians be vis-à-vis these divisions? Should they seek to keep religion and politics separate? Should they support one side? Or should they seek to bridge the disputes?

Unless changes are mandated by new developments in public health, the series will be presented in a hybrid format. Each speaker will present live at Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Peter and participants may attend in person. At the same time, it will be possible to participate electronically – to listen to the speakers via the internet and to participate in online discussion groups. It will also be possible for participants to attend some sessions in person and tune in to others. In the event of a winter storm, that session will occur only via the internet. Sessions will be recorded and made available (for a limited time) to registered participants who miss a session.

We look forward to having you join us for the 2022 Simpson Forum as we study Christians and a Divided America.

This event is sponsored by the Barbara and Justin Simpson Endowment Fund, Trinity Lutheran Church, Union Presbyterian Church, Holy Communion Episcopal Church, and First Lutheran Church.

**The 2022 Simpson Forum will include 4 events, each beginning at 7:00 p.m.**

I. Thursday, January 20, (single session)  
**Christianity in the United States: A Brief Historical Background**, Dr. Darrell Jodock

II. Tuesday, January 25, (double session)  
**A Divided Christianity: The Christian Right**, Rev. Angela Denker, and  
**A Divided Christianity: Mainline Christians**, Dr. Sarah Ruble

III. Thursday, January 27, (single session)  
**More Than Conquerors: Our Calling to a Robust Citizenship**, Dr. Mark Tranvik

IV. Thursday, February 3, (double session)  
**The Courageous Discipleship of Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, Dr. Douglas Huff,  
and a final open discussion,  
**How Do We Move Forward?**

Registration for the series is \$10 and can be completed online at: <https://www.trinitystpeter.org/the-simpson-forum.html> or by calling Trinity Lutheran Church at 507-934-4786. The fee is waived for any students wishing to join us but registration is required to be included in the Zoom meeting. Multiple viewers are permitted at each email site.

**The registration deadline is  
Wednesday, January 12, 2022.**

## SPEAKERS FOR THE 2022 SIMPSON FORUM

Dr. Darrell Jodock, Professor of Religion Emeritus, Gustavus Adolphus College, has degrees from St. Olaf College, Luther Seminary, and Yale University. Dr. Jodock's graduate work focused on historical theology. In addition to chairing two ELCA committees, he currently is a member of the national Jewish-Christian dialogue on pastoral issues and serves on the interreligious "convening table" of the National Council of Churches. *Embracing Diversity*, a book he and Bill Nelsen co-authored that discusses racial and interreligious relations has recently been published by Fortress Press.

The Rev. Angela Denker is the author of an award-winning book, *Red State Christians: Understanding the Voters who elected Donald Trump*. The book is based on interviews conducted as she traveled across the U.S. in 2018 in an effort to understand grassroots communities, especially in rural America. It combines these reports with an analysis of broader national trends and influential leaders on the religious right. As a veteran journalist, she has written for many publications, including Sports Illustrated, the Washington Post, and Fortune Magazine. She currently serves as Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Brownton, MN.

Dr. Sarah Ruble is a Professor of Religion at Gustavus Adolphus College and a member of Union Presbyterian Church. She specializes in American religious history with a particular focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She has degrees from Seattle Pacific University, Duke Divinity School, and Duke University. Her scholarly work includes a book entitled *The Gospel of Freedom and Power: Protestant Missionaries in American Culture Since World War II*. She has recently completed a public history project, a YouTube-based Sunday School curriculum on the history of race and Christianity in the U.S.

Dr. Mark Tranvik has degrees from Luther College, Yale Divinity School, and Luther Seminary. Since 2020 he has been teaching Reformation history and theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. Earlier, he served for ten years as Associate Pastor at Cross of Glory Lutheran Church in Brooklyn Park and taught for 25 years in the religion department at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. He is the author of *Martin Luther and the Called Life*.

Dr. Douglas Huff, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, Gustavus Adolphus College, and a member of the Church of the Holy Communion Episcopal, earned degrees at Concordia College (Moorhead) and the University of Missouri. He has published numerous philosophical essays, written 14 plays which have won national and international awards, and authored "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Life and Work" for the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. His play, *Emil's Enemies* (about Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the German Resistance to the Third Reich), will be published in German and English by Fontis Publishing of Basel, Switzerland.