

# LEADING IN ANXIOUS TIMES

“A healthy [church] is one that actively and responsibly addresses or heals its disturbances, not one with an absence of trouble.” ~ Peter Steinke

It's a reality of life that the Body of Christ, the church, wrestles continually with difficult issues and challenging times. Whether it's economic hardship, mission and outreach, interpretation of scripture, denominational decisions, or any of many other challenges, “being church” has always been fraught with disagreements, anxiety, and differing points of view. Our Lutheran heritage is one of ongoing reformation. We are a church known for asking hard questions and struggling with real issues of life and faith. The following resources are a *sampling* of print and media materials meant to help provide some leadership tools for dealing with anxious times.



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- Peter Steinke's work for church leaders is invaluable. His book and accompanying video reflections, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* will be especially helpful. Steinke's video, **The Balancing Act**, also provides good background. (B3302, DVDs 146, 147) Additional articles, books, and media resources related to anxiety and family systems are described at [www.eandsynod.org/resource-center/recommended/family-systems-and-healthy-congregations/](http://www.eandsynod.org/resource-center/recommended/family-systems-and-healthy-congregations/)
- The video **Reinventing Leadership** with Rabbi Edwin Friedman describes how congregations become dysfunctional when gripped by anxiety. (VT1689)
- Transitions and change are themes in Craig Satterlee's *When God Speaks Through Change*, a “must read” for preachers and others who want to help congregations experience God's presence, grace, power, and direction in challenging times. (B3078)
- Two **Nooma** films may help address some of the anxiety of difficult issues. These ten minute DVDs include *You* and *Whirlwind*. *You* deals with heated debates and disagreements. *Whirlwind* addresses how much we want certainty and answers in a world that often is uncertain. (DVD 174 & 278)

- For worship, *Stilling the Storm: Worship and Congregational Leadership in Difficult Times* by Kathleen Smith shows how difficult times affect the worship life of a congregation and how worship can be a key part of healing. (B3310)
- A short read, *Difficult Conversations* by Katie Day provides concrete direction for initiating, cultivating, and sustaining discussion of troubling issues. (B3564)
- “**Called to Deal With Difficult Issues**” is a four-session method for congregational theological reflection and decision making. It could be adapted to fit a number of topics. (PR871)
- **Differences** is the title of a 4-minute DVD to help people explore and discuss their own differences through the 'voices' of dogs. It begins by exploring differences and ends by discovering how much we have in common. It also helps point to common ground on which to build unity. Supplementary materials at [www.differencesfilm.com](http://www.differencesfilm.com) (DVD269)
- *Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations* by David Brubaker helps leaders manage conflict in the face of change. (B3608)

These resources are available for loan from the Eastern North Dakota Synod Resource Center. You may also go to the online catalog at [www.eandsynod.org](http://www.eandsynod.org)

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