



Katie's Grant Supporting Unique ELCA Ministry

Unnamed No More, A Lutheran Safe Church Ministry

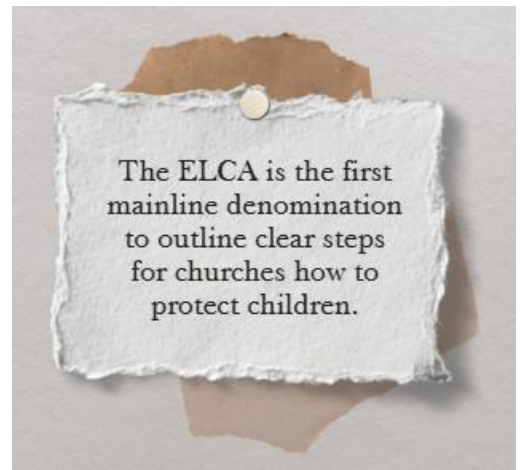
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Katie's Grant through WELCA is playing a vital role for a new and growing Lutheran ministry. *Unnamed No More* is a trauma-informed Safe Church Ministry engaging faith communities in faithful conversation and response to gender-based violence.

The ELCA has recently taken significant steps uplifting the protection of children and vulnerable adults as a Christian responsibility. In 2025, a social message on Child Protection was adopted churchwide. Bishop Curry uplifts the weight and urgency of this social message: (see link here).

Many congregations lack the structure to follow through with the recommendations outlined in the social message. *Unnamed No More* steps into that gap. Bishop Curry names *Unnamed No More* as a national resource for synods, clergy, and congregations to follow through with the recommendations of the social message on Child Protection. [Social Message](#)



Through the support of Katie's Grant, this ministry is now offered on a sliding scale, ensuring that no congregation is turned away due to financial limitations.

Why This Ministry Matters

Gender-based violence (child abuse, domestic violence, sexual violence, and elder abuse) is far more present in our congregations than often acknowledged. Many in our pews carry stories of harm, our children within are vulnerable to it, and there are those currently in our pews in unsafe homes and relationships.

Too often, churches respond to these realities with silence or denial. In some cases, the church itself contributes to the harm by relocating predators, silencing children and vulnerable adults, or placing additional burdens on survivors.

These responses do not reflect the Gospel. They deepen the wounds of survivors, enable abusers, and make our sanctuaries unsafe for children and other vulnerable people.

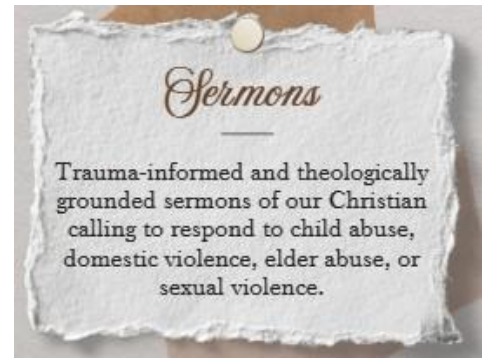
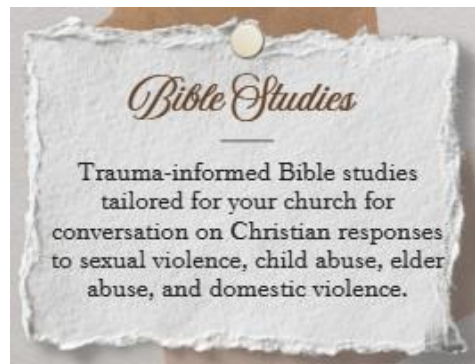
Unnamed No More exists because these realities are common, often hidden, and complex. Using trauma-informed theology for its framework, the ministry seeks to address these realities theologically in ways that do not retraumatize survivors or silence harm, but instead reflect God's justice, accountability, and hope.

A Ministry of Dialogue and Action within Church

Faith communities are called to embody Christ's love by honoring the dignity and worth of every person. *Unnamed No More* centers this call, for the sake of faith for all those affected by abuse, including:

- Those who are in active situations of abuse
- Those who are healing from past harm
- Those who cause harm
- And for vulnerable adults and children

The mission of *Unnamed No More* is to equip congregations to minister effectively to those impacted by abuse, and to engage theologically with the realities of harm. *Unnamed No More* partners with congregations through a range of ministries, including:



Naming What Has Been Ignored

Unnamed No More bears the name of the unnamed woman in Judges 19, a biblical narrative of horrific violence that Scripture does not ignore. Her story calls the people of God to “*consider, take counsel, and speak out*” (Judges 19:30) For the sake of faith of all those affected by abuse, the Church and its leaders hold a responsibility to name it honestly and respond with faithful action. By confronting this history, *Unnamed No More* aims to be a ministry of truth-telling, accountability and reconciliation.

This mission also acknowledges a difficult truth that Christianity has often shaped irresponsible and dangerous responses to gender-based violence. Christian history includes theological frameworks that have reinforced gender hierarchies, normalized suffering, and minimized abuse in the name of forgiveness or marital duty. These patterns:

- Leave victim-survivors isolated and unsafe
- Fail to minister accountability and repentance to those in our pews who are doing the harm
- Fall short of our biblical mandate to protect children and vulnerable adults



A Unique Calling



This ministry is shaped through a combination of professional expertise and theological education. Its founder, Staci Stought, is a retired Sexual Assault Police Officer with specialized forensic expertise in Child Abuse. Drawing on her experience in child abuse forensic investigations, along with offender safety planning and child protection, Staci brings together professional knowledge and faith-based reflection in service to the church.

Staci is a Pastoral Care Minister for Messiah Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio, and has been endorsed for Word and Sacrament within the Southern Ohio Synod.

From Seminary Project to Growing Ministry

Originating as a final assignment ‘*How can churches faithfully respond to abuse?*’ in an Old Testament course with Dr. Anna Marsh, the work evolved into a Bible study at Messiah Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio. Staci’s theological formation deepened through trauma-informed ministry addressing child abuse and sexual violence through Zero Abuse Project at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Since then, 15 Lutheran congregations have engaged in more than 40 sermons, trainings, studies, and workshops. In 2024, the ministry was selected for a Lutheran SEEDS Fellowship through Luther Seminary, and in 2025, it was selected for Katie’s Grant through WELCA.

Facing Challenges

A significant challenge for this ministry is the lack of church structure to support safe church ministry. Cultural and theological resistance in addressing GBV also yet remains within all levels of the church. Some Christian leaders view abuse as a private matter or distrust the scope of abuse for those sitting in their pews. This silence leaves survivors without affirmation of their dignity and allows harm to continue unchecked.

Looking Ahead with Hope

Unnamed *No More* envisions a future in which churches are no longer silent in the face of gender-based violence. Rooted in the call to “consider, take counsel, and speak out” (Judges 19:30) and grounded in Christ’s promise of abundant life (John 10:10), this ministry works toward sanctuaries that are safe, accountable, and life-giving for all.

What Can I Do?

A simple request can open the door for your congregation to become better equipped to respond faithfully to abuse.

Ask for a
Workshop for
your
Congregation

Encourage your pastor, church staff, and leadership to participate in *Unnamed No More's* workshops. Yearly theological workshops centering abuse are recommended. Zoom trainings available for congregations outside Ohio.

Break
the
Silence

Help create a culture where abuse is named honestly in church, and where Christian responses are explored. Inquire for a trauma-informed Bible study or a sermon on abuse.

Sponsor a
Workshop for
a
congregation

Financial support ensures that safe church ministry remains accessible to all congregations regardless of inability to pay.



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