



# Moments for Mission

Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.*  
 February 2021

## Staff

**Bishop Richard E. Jaech**

**Rev. Rebecca Shjerven**  
*bishop's associate*

**Allison Kles**  
*office manager*

**Phone**  
 (253) 535-8300

**Address**  
 420 121<sup>st</sup> St. S  
 Tacoma, WA 98444

**E-mail**  
[swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu)

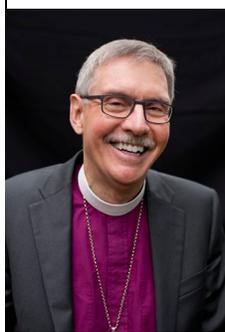
**Websites**  
[www.lutheranssw.org](http://www.lutheranssw.org)  
[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

**Facebook page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Southwestern-Washington-Synod/1290477871337786>

**Twitter**  
 @SWWASynod

## ACT Now to End Racism!

Bishop Richard Jaech



The pastors, deacons and chaplains of the Southwestern Washington Synod attended our annual Bishop's Convocation, which focused on the theme:

**ACT Now! to End Racism! Awaken, Confront and Transform**

**A.C.T. NOW!**  
 TO END RACISM  
 awaken • confront • transform

The purpose of the Convocation, led by Stacy Kitahata, a co-director at Holden Village, was to grow in mind, heart, and skills. Workshops were led by Indigenous Native American, Black, Korean and white leaders from our Synod and related ministries. Participants worked individually and in groups to:

- sharpen our mental awareness and understanding of racism
- deepen our heart connection to people of other ethnic groups
- learn skills that will help our congregations address racism

A Synod Anti-Racism team is now being assembled to plan events and support congregations as we address the racism and unconscious white privilege that divides God's family in many ways. **If you would like to volunteer to be a part of this Synod Anti-Racism team, please contact me at [jaechre@plu.edu](mailto:jaechre@plu.edu)**

It is good timing that, as February arrives, we now begin Black History Month. Knowing the stories of the African American community, both their accomplishments and their struggles, is an important part of affirming the dignity and value that God bestows on all of God's people. On the History website (<https://www.history.com/tag/black-history>), and many other websites, there is a rich amount of information to learn, digest, and celebrate this month. Here are a few examples:

*Continued next page*

*Bishop Jaech continued from page 1*

**Black History Month:** The celebration of [Black History Month](#) began as “Negro History Week,” which was created in 1926 by [Carter G. Woodson](#), a noted African American historian, scholar, educator and publisher. It became a month-long celebration in 1976. The month of February was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of [Frederick Douglass](#) and [Abraham Lincoln](#).

**Famous Protestors and Activists:** While [Rosa Parks](#) is credited with helping to spark the [Civil Rights movement](#) when she refused to give up her public bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955—inspiring the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#)—the lesser-known [Claudette Colvin](#) was arrested nine months prior for not giving up her bus seat to white passengers.

**Supreme Court Justice:** [Thurgood Marshall](#) was the first African American ever appointed to the U.S. [Supreme Court](#). He was appointed by President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) and served on the court from 1967 to 1991.



**Eminent Scientist:** [George Washington Carver](#), shown above, developed 300 derivative products from peanuts among them cheese, milk, coffee, flour, ink, dyes, plastics, wood stains, soap, linoleum, medicinal oils and cosmetics.

**First Woman Representative:** [Shirley Chisholm](#) was the first African American woman elected to the [House of Representatives](#). She was elected in 1968 and represented the state of [New York](#). **First Senator:** [Hiram Rhodes Revels](#) was the first African American ever elected to the [U.S. Senate](#). He represented the state of [Mississippi](#) from February 1870 to March 1871.

In John 17, Jesus prayed, “That they may all be one.” I am grateful that the Spirit of Christ is moving strongly among us in these days to dissolve the walls that divide us and bring us into the full unity of God’s people, whatever our color or tribe.

Bishop Rick Jaech

## Hiring Process Begins for New Director of Evangelical Mission

We are happy to announce that the position of Director for Evangelical Mission in the Southwestern Washington Synod is now open for applications. We encourage all interested people to consider this position. The key responsibilities of the DEM are to lead the Synod's Outreach Board in initiating and supporting new ministries, energize existing ministries, and provide Stewardship training and support, in collaboration with the Bishop. We encourage you to consider this position and also to pass this information on to other people who you think would be good candidates for this position.

Since this is a position that the ELCA Churchwide provides to synods, the hiring process takes place through the ELCA office. You can view the job description and begin the application process by clicking:

<https://elca.atsondemand.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=512830.viewjobdetail&CID=512830&JID=757360> It is also available at [www.elca.org/careers](http://www.elca.org/careers) and then going to the Job Board.

All applications and the hiring/call process will be carried out by a combined committee from the Synod and ELCA Churchwide staff. We pray for God's blessing and wisdom as we seek the right person for this vital ministry.

## End of Year Reports

links sent in email to congregations and rosters ministers dated January 26<sup>th</sup>  
Reports are due by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Reports to the Bishop for rostered ministers
- Congregation Annual Reports
- Congregation parochial reports A & C
- Mission Intent

The giving statements from Region 1 for 2020 will be mailed from the Synod Office by mid-February.

## Congregations in Transition – February 2021

Lord, we pray for your wisdom, insight, and peace for these congregations, and leaders in our synod who are working through a time of pastoral transition. We give you thanks for each and every one. Amen.

Congregations	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
Bethel, Brush Prairie	P	TR	Pulpit Supply
Christ, Federal Way	P	TR	Marietta Nelson-Bittle SAM
Gloria Dei, Kelson	P	TR	Pr. Elten Zerby
Grace, Port Townsend	P	TR	Pr. Alan Berg
Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma	P	C	Pulpit supply
Mountain View, Edgewood	P	TR	Pr Mike Greenwalt, Pr Kim Latterell
Messiah, Auburn	AP		Pr. Chuck Harris
Ocean Park, Ocean Park	P	TR	Louise Buckles, SAM
Prince of Peace, Forks	P	TR	Pastor Mike Hanson
St. John's, Chehalis	P	TR	Pr. Eric Utto-Galarneau
St. John's, Lakewood	P	TR	Pr. Becca Parkins
Zion, Camas	P	TR	Assoc Pr. Susan Dollinger

*Mobility position key*  
P – Pastor  
AP – Associate Pastor  
D – Deacon

*Mobility status key:*  
NV – New Vacancy  
TR – Transition  
I – Interviewing  
C – Calling  
SAM – Synodically Authorized Minister

### Synod Calls:

**Rev. Matt March** has been called to serve as Chaplain/Bereavement Coordinator for Assured Home Health Hospice and Home Care in Olympia. He has been serving in this position since November 11, 2020.

**Pastor Becca Parkins** was called to serve as Interim Pastor at St John's Lutheran in Lakewood starting in January.

### On Leave from Call:

- **Rev. Linda Milks** (October 10, 2020)
- **Rev. Lydia Brannon** (Dec 31, 2020)
- **Rev. Molly Knutson-Keller** will leave Gloria Dei Lutheran in Olympia at the end of this month, where she has been serving as Associate Pastor since 2011. Pastor Molly is running with a long-time dream of her of a coaching business helping people connect body, mind, and spirit for happier, wholistic living. Her company is Walk and Talk Coaching, [www.walktalkcoach.co](http://www.walktalkcoach.co)

## ELCA Future Directions 2025 Goals and Priority Areas

The ELCA's Future Directions 2025 goals and priority areas are for the ELCA as a whole church. These are based in a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands. And they express what this church has collectively said is important into the future

<https://elca.org/Future-Directions>

### **Goal 1: A Thriving Church: Spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all.**

#### *Priority areas for action*

- **Church identity** – Develop a deep and shared understanding of who we are as a Lutheran church and equip leaders and all the baptized to communicate our theology and beliefs in accessible and compelling ways.
- **Renew and strengthen evangelism** – Through all expressions of this church, and in accompaniment with global companions, foster new approaches to evangelism that are compatible with being Lutheran and generationally, technologically, and contextually relevant and effective.
- **Church leaders** – Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to formation, education and continuing development of lay leaders and rostered ministers, with emphasis on theological fluency and equipping leaders for evangelism and vocations in a wide range of contexts and ministries.
- **Renewal and formation of congregations and worship communities** – Support and empower congregations and communities of worship through mission planning and development, encouraging a culture of deepening faith, hope and openness to change.
- **Ecumenical dialogues and relationships** – Maintain our commitment to being a church deeply engaged in ecumenical dialogue, relationships and partnerships for the sake of Christian unity.

Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 1:16

### **Goal 2: An Equipping Church: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.**

#### *Priority areas for action*

- **Baptismal vocation** – Form and equip the baptized to express their faith through their life and witness as followers of Jesus.

*Continued next page*

*ELCA Future Goals, continued from page 5*

- **Faith formation and practice** – Support and provide resources for faith formation and practice with children and across the life span – within households, workplaces and communities – and share learnings across this church.
- **Youth and young adults in mission** – Provide space, support and opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in ministries and pursue their calling.

Philippians 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 6:3-4, Mark 10:13-16

**Goal 3: A Welcoming Church: An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.**

*Priority areas for action*

- **An outwardly focused church** – Support congregations and worship communities in actively reaching out to people in their neighborhoods through relationships, in service and with an openness for mutual learning.
- **Theological and cultural competence of leaders** – Build confidence and competence among lay leaders and rostered ministers to provide an authentic welcome to people from different cultures and circumstances and embrace the ideas and experience they bring.
- **Church leadership profile** – Pursue a leadership profile that reflects the diversity to which the ELCA aspires and endeavor to match the gifts and experience of leaders to communities and ministries where those gifts are needed.
- **Addressing discrimination and oppression** – Equip and support leaders at all levels of the church to understand, speak out and act against discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and social status.

1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28

**Goal 4: A Visible Church: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.**

*Priority areas for action*

- **Poverty and hunger** – Encourage and harness resources for local, national and global ministries to alleviate poverty and hunger and improve the way this church tells these stories of God's work in the world – internally and externally.

*Continued next page*

*ELCA Future Goals, continued from page 6*

- **Response to disasters and humanitarian crises** – Support and take action in local and international response to natural disasters, violence and conflict and assist the growing number of people affected by displacement and forced migration.
- **Lift up the work of ELCA-related social ministries** – Build awareness across this church of the important work of ELCA-related social ministry organizations and understanding their work as central to the life of this church.
- **Advocacy and action on economic justice, racial justice, gender justice and climate justice** – Be a visible witness and agent of change for justice and creation care.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21, John 13:12-15, Isaiah 58:1-11

## **Goal 5: A Well-Governed, Connected and Sustainable Church:**

### *Priority areas for action*

- **Leadership in governance** – Re-evaluate and strengthen governance of the ELCA to provide for clarity in roles and authority, strong relationships and shared leadership and a culture of willing accountability.
- **Church structures** – Review church structures to ensure their fit with future needs of the ELCA, with a focus on responsibilities, functions and resourcing of synods and the churchwide organization and how best to support and resource congregations.
- **Resources for mission** – Develop and take forward a church strategy to grow resources for mission and ministry and ensure distribution and use of resources aligns with roles, expectations and priorities for the whole church.
- **Communication** – Improve communication across this church in support of proclaiming the gospel, new forms of evangelism, connecting the church as one part of the body of Christ and sharing success stories, experience and learning.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9

**Future Church Resources for congregation use:** <https://elca.org/Resources/Future-Directions>

## A Call to Prayer

January 14, 2021

The psalmist reminds us that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). Our nation is bracing amid reports of acts of political violence planned for the coming days at state capitols and in our nation’s capital. Wherever you are, and whatever your political beliefs, we are one in Christ Jesus. On this firm foundation, as a pastor and a bishop, I invite you to join me in prayer during this time of chaos, confusion, fear and grief. For even when “the nations are in an uproar,” we are encouraged that “the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge” (Psalm 46:6a, 7).

*-ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton*

Mighty God, our great help in trouble, as distrust, fear and violence threaten our nation and its peoples, we come to you in prayer, seeking your wisdom, strength and peace.

We pray for the health of our democracy and its leaders (especially ...), that those elected to serve may utilize government structures and processes to promote human flourishing and the common good...

We pray for those who risk harm to ensure the safety of others: police officers, security guards, the National Guard and other military personnel...

We pray for an end to the evils of white supremacy, Christian nationalism, and racial violence that threatens, destroys and kill...

*Continued next page*

We pray for those experiencing trauma induced by the public display and use of hateful language and symbols, including Confederate flags, anti-Semitic language and images, and nooses...

We pray for Black, Indigenous, People of Color and historically marginalized groups traumatized by violence stemming from white supremacy: lynchings, bombings, vandalism and church burnings...

We pray for clergy and church leaders, especially for those burdened by mistrust and painful divisions in their communities. Give them and all people the courage to confront white supremacy, Christian nationalism and racist rhetoric with messages of truth, sustained by the power of your magnificent love...

We pray for people and communities struggling to discern your voice amid competing voices clamoring for attention. Direct us to listen deeply and celebrate the diversity among us. Freed in Christ, we dare to witness to your promise of abundant life and abiding peace...

*Continued next page*

*A Call to Prayer continued from page 8*

In this time of great uncertainty, we pray without ceasing, trusting that your word, Holy God, never returns empty and your mercy never fails. We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Additional prayers for the nation and times of conflict, crisis and disaster can be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (pages 76-77) and in *All Creation Sings* (pages 49-51). The Great Litany (ELW 238) and the prayers of lament in *All Creation Sings* would also be a helpful resource in this time (pages 61-66).

## **Faith Action Network's 2021 State Legislative Agenda**

### **Advocating for a Biennial Budget that Reflects our Values as a State**

- Support revenue bills that balance our tax code and promote racial equity (e.g. close the tax break on Capital Gains and establish a tax on large/profitable corporations via a payroll tax on highly paid employees)
- Support Emergency Cash Assistance bills for our most at-risk families such as the Working Families Tax Credit (Sen. Nguyen & Rep. Thai)
- Support the Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates Group priorities such as no cuts to TANF/HEN/ABD (Temporary Aid to Needy Families, Housing & Essential Needs, Aged/Blind/Disabled programs)
- Support the Communities for Our Colleges Coalition priorities for funding to create greater access to educational & training programs at community and technical colleges
- Fund Basic Food and Employment Training navigators at community/technical colleges
- Invest in the SNAP match programs for fruit and vegetables as well as expand funding for EFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program) - no increase since 2012

### **Reforming our Policing & Criminal Justice Systems**

- Change Police culture by establishing civil causes of action for money damages and prohibit officers and their employers from raising qualified immunity as a defense (Rep. Thai)
- Mandate use of De-escalation by law enforcement and use of Deadly Force only as a last resort (Rep. Johnson)
- Create an Office for Independent Criminal Investigations and a Special Prosecutor (Rep. Entenman)
- Prohibit unnecessary Police Tactics (Rep. Johnson) *Continued next page*

*Advocacy continued from page 9*

- Support the DWLS (Driving While License Suspended) reform bill (Sen. Salomon & Rep. Johnson)
- Strengthen Decertification and Licensing standards for law enforcement and support reforms at the Criminal Justice Training Commission (Sen. Pedersen & Rep. Goodman)
- Examine and reduce law enforcement related entrapment of our youth (Rep. Senn)

### **Creating Housing Opportunities & Preventing Homelessness**

- Support the Housing Justice bill to limit discrimination by landlords for those coming out of prison (Sen. Darneille & Rep. Davis)
- Increase funding for the Housing Trust Fund by \$250 M
- Pass the Eviction Reform (Just Cause) & Rental Assistance bill (Rep. Macri & Sen. Kuderer)
- Increase the Real Estate Document Recording Fee (\$100 M)

### **Addressing Climate Change**

- Pass the Clean Fuels bill (Rep. Fitzgibbons & Sen. Carlyle)
- Pass the HEAL Act 2.0 (Healthy Environment for All) (Rep. Lekanoff)
- Require all Light Duty Vehicles to be electric by 2030 (Rep. Macri)
- Support the Green Revenue Bond bill (Rep. Lekanoff)

### **Protecting Immigrants, Civil and Human Rights for All**

- Support the Ranked Choice Voting bill to lift restrictions (with Fix Democracy First)
- Pass the Voting Rights Restoration bill for those coming out of prison (Sen. Kuderer & Rep-elect Simmons)
- Support restrictions on the Open-Carry gun rights statute in public places (Rep. Senn)
- Pass the Insurance Credit Scoring prohibition bill to create more parity for communities of color (Sen. Das & Rep. Kirby)
- Remove the exemption in the Office of Civil Legal Aid program for undocumented residents (Rep. Lekanoff)
- Create Unemployment Insurance benefits for undocumented workers (Sen. Saldana & Rep. Gregerson)
- Support the Private Prison prohibition bill (Rep. Ortiz-Self) *Continued next page*

*Advocacy continued from page 10*

- Support requiring a tribal consultative process regarding high schools with Native American mascots (Rep. Lekanoff)

### **Ensuring Healthcare & Mental Health Access**

- Support the Dental Therapy reform bill
- Support the Universal Health Care Work Group recommendations
- Expand the Apple Health Insurance program to age 26 for all who reside in our state
- Support increasing funding for Public Health programs

## **New Mission Starts Highlight**

### **Love God Ministries**

Love God Ministries is our first online worshipping community founded by Pastor Vera McEwen along with a board of diverse individuals. This ministry established an initial worship service cadence of Thursday, Friday and Sunday, though that may be updated as needs of the community change. Services officially began in January 2021.



This is a part-time (25%) call from the Southwestern Washington Synod, though it is absolutely a full-time call for Pastor Vera. The ministry is funded by the other vocations of Pastor Vera as a certified coach, trainer, and speaker with the John C. Maxwell Team (JMT) and through her CranioSacral Therapy (CST) practice, as well as funding from the ELCA and the Synod Outreach Board.

Pastor Vera founded Love God Ministries because conversations with people revealed a need for a community of believers where it does not matter how you look, but recognize that you are a child of God. As Romans 8.16-17 and 10.9-13 states that all who believe in Jesus Christ and accept him as their Savior are heirs, children of God. Her primary emphasis is spreading God's Love by providing pastoral care, preaching God's Loving Word, teaching God's Light-Filled Word, and implementing God's Living relational group architecture via in-home Life Groups. She became an ordained Pastor in the ELCA in October 2020 as she serves on the roster of the Southwestern Washington Synod. Pastor Vera completed her MDIV academic studies at Luther Seminary in Minnesota where she graduated in May 2019. She is currently reviewing the prospects of a doctorate in religious

Continued next page

*Love God Ministry, continued from page 11*

studies with an emphasis on Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic as encouraged by her professors at seminary.

In addition to her vocation as Pastor, Pastor Vera ministers as a Certified Coach – Trainer – and Speaker with the John C. Maxwell Team. With God's help, she implements 1 Thessalonians 5.11, motivating people to be and do their very best by building one another up. If you see a joyous, ever-singing sister in Christ rapidly moving by, yes in the wee hours of the morning too (without coffee), that it is likely to be Pastor Vera. Pastor Vera, who after years of being pursued by God, stopped running and answered the call, halleluiah, יהוה הללו! Vera's ordination service can be found here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbpK2GShWn8>

## **How to Support the Men and Ministry of Living Stones Prison Congregation**

**Prayer** - pray that our men and the WCC staff will be safe and well in these days of the COVID outbreak. ([Click here](#) for an update of all state prison facilities.)

**Advocate for criminal justice reform** - Several bills that could affect our men and their families are before the state legislative session. Faith Action Network (FAN) invites you to learn through their annual Interfaith Advocacy Day, to be held virtually on Thursday, Feb. 11. There will also be opportunity to meet with your state legislator via Zoom. Click here for more info and to register: <https://fanwa.org/interfaith-advocacy-day/>

**Weekly newsletter (WCC edition)** - Short paragraphs are always needed for this weekly publication of encouragement for the men and staff of WCC. Please submit your items to Sandi by Tuesday each week at [livingstonesassistant@outlook.com](mailto:livingstonesassistant@outlook.com). Click here to read past issues: <https://livingstonesprisoncongregation.com/blog/>

**Clothing and book donations** - Good, used clothing is always needed for men who are returning to the outside community. Clothing donations may be brought to the prison at any time and dropped off in the outside blue bin (outside the reception area). Book donations (including Bibles) need prior approval before being taken to the prison warehouse. Please contact Sandi at [Livingstonesassistant@outlook.com](mailto:Livingstonesassistant@outlook.com) for assistance.

**Give a financial gift** - Donations may be given online <https://livingstonesprisoncongregation.com/> -(click the green "GIVE" button) or mail donations to Living Stones Prison Congregation, c/o Faith Lutheran Church, 1212 Connection Street, Shelton, WA 98584.

*The Leaders and men of Living Stones thank you for your partnership and appreciate that you are part of God's work of changing lives in this community!*

## Devotional: Identification beyond binaries

by Larry Harrold, ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellow\* in ELCA Advocacy on January 12, 2021

Believer and non-believer. Educated and uneducated. Rich and poor. Democrat and Republican. Male and female... How numerous are the binaries with which we live!

In many ways 2020 was the year of binaries. The election, the social unrest around racial injustice and a worsening pandemic revealed how deep our divisions have become. Gridlock ensues in governments, insults fly online, and protesters clash on the streets. Our world seems to be turning-in on itself. Yet we know we are inextricably connected.

TEXT: Proverbs 22:1-9 – A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold...

It's in challenging times that Scripture can provide comfort and context. Proverbs 22:1-9 shows the continuity in the binaries that we witness, particularly between rich and poor. The rich yield power and possess gold and silver, yet the author makes clear that the humble are blessed and receive honor and life. This passage seemingly depicts a binaried society yet the second verse lays out: "The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD is the maker of them all."

The events of 2020 underscore how important it is to keep our interconnectedness in mind in more than just this moment. People lost their homes and jobs, and many went hungry. Countless have lost a loved one to COVID-19. In my own community I've seen churches, food banks, shelters, and any person of goodwill take on the weight of supporting those in need, but the response only goes so far.

In my management of my church's community garden, the produce we donate is nourishing, but it will not sustain the hungry indefinitely. Not only is it not enough, but people often need information and tools to prepare it to eat. Food drives face similar issues, and temporary housing is just that... temporary. The institutions and organizations of my already economically depressed slice of Pennsylvania cannot alone meet needs.

While some struggle and others struggle to care for them, our leaders are slow to act. Aid is minimal and mismanaged. Yet we know that while this is happening, the most powerful have expanded their own wealth and security to unprecedented levels. Our advocacy, as church together, needs to take place. Immediate need must be met, yes, but long-term solutions to the systemic causes of homelessness, hunger, and violence must be made. Our leaders must be held accountable and pressured to act.

Proverbs 22:6 passes along the wisdom: train children in the right way and when old they will not stray. I have fond memories of my grandmother including me in her service to the *continued next page*

community. Her faith, which she passed on to me, led her to serve the most vulnerable. That faith compels me to do the same. Yet I, like many before me, live in a turbulent moment.

I am called to not only serve in the presence of immediate need, but to also use my voice, inspired by the active faith instilled in me at a young age, to be an advocate for systemic change that brings new and abundant life to people in my community and beyond.

The passage in Proverbs acknowledges binaries of the world and also guides us in considering our identifiers. While the rich are comfortable and powerful, they will lack blessings, honor, and life if they are not humble and “fear the Lord” (Proverbs 22:4). Calamity comes to those who perpetuate injustice, especially as it pertains to the poor.

All people deserve care, justice, and respect from one another, because we all come from the same Creator. In this new year, with new policy makers, and with the hope of an end to the pandemic, let us be strong advocates so that all know “they share their bread with the poor” (Proverbs 22:9).

*\* This **New Year Devotional Series** has been composed by the three **ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellows** serving in 2020-2021. “The ministry of ELCA World Hunger involves young adult engagement in conversations and formulating solutions to this systemic and universal obstacle to physical and spiritual well-being. Hunger is one of the key issues we must address as a church, for injustice and inequity are consistent themes across our local and global food systems. One way to address hunger and ensure young adult involvement in the ELCA and in World Hunger’s faith-based work is by funding the Hunger Advocacy Fellowship (HAF) position, a year-long contract position designed to cultivate the leadership of individuals looking to halt the expanding reach of hunger through advocacy,” describes Taina Diaz-Reyes, Hunger Advocacy Fellow in D.C.*

*Larry Harrold’s placement is with the [Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania](#) (LAMPa) office in Harrisburg, Pa. A native of Sunbury, Pa., he graduated from Susquehanna University in 2019 with a BA in History and Religious Studies. He is currently a candidate to receive a MA in Modern History from the University of Kent in England, where he completed a Fulbright Scholarship. Harrold is deeply committed to the intersection between ecclesiastical service and social justice; he plans to go to seminary to learn more about incorporating justice into ecclesial ministry.*

## Synod Assembly

May 14-15, 2021 online.

Registration opens later this month. Please make sure that all of your voting members have access to a computer and internet service.

We will have pre-hearings in April on how-to participate, the synod budget, proposed constitutional changes, elections and resolutions, so that people understand what is being done and their role in the process and have the opportunity for discussions.

## Vulnerabilities Amplified: The Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTIQ+ Communities Globally

**Pacific Lutheran University's 5th Biennial  
Ambassador Chris Stevens Celebration of Service**

Featuring a keynote presentation by Amie Bishop, MSW, MPH (Global Health and Human Rights Consultant, Senior Research Advisor for OutRight Action International and former Peace Corps Volunteer)

**Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm**

**PLU Virtual Event**

**Free admission. REGISTRATION REQUIRED to obtain Zoom links**

**Register:** <https://www.plu.edu/vulnerabilities-amplified/?%281%29>

The Ambassador Chris Stevens Celebration of Service celebrates the life of an extraordinary public servant and former Peace Corps volunteer killed on Sept. 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya. Email and questions to [wang.center@plu.edu](mailto:wang.center@plu.edu)

[REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION](#)

## “Being the Church in the Midst of Crisis” Webinars

To register and view past webinars on related topics:

<https://www.pathlms.com/tcn/courses/17417>

**Future webinars are 11am EST on Thursdays**

- February 11 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Hopefulness
- February 18 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Risk-Taking
- February 25 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Collaboration
- March 4 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Timeless/Timely Practices
- March 11 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Visionary Leadership
- March 18 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Missional Focus
- March 25 - Thriving in the 21st Century - Missional Fervor

*Brought to you by: The Center for Healthy Churches, The Church Network, The Presbyterian Foundation, Baptist News Global, Truett Seminary, The Church Network Pneumatrix, Uptick, Ministering to Ministers and the Gardner-Webb Charlie Curb Center for Faith Leadership*

## Congregation News



Allie Smith, of Bonney Lake, is the very first female Eagle Scout of Scout Troop 525, which is chartered by **Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood**. “At Midtown Park in Bonney Lake, Allie fixed up and redid a trail that was part of the previous trail system that had become overgrown and disorganized. Part of the work included widening the walkway, spreading bark and adding signage.” (from *The Suburban Times*) Congratulations to Allie on her achievement! Allie is one of nine local teens recognized as part of the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts by Boy Scouts of America.

**St. Paul, Vancouver** had team of volunteers install 7 new windows in their Outreach Center and men from their shelter helped them organize their storage room. Good job, all!

**Celebration Lutheran Church, Puyallup**, has a small group of quilters that hasn't let the pandemic slow them down from providing quilts to the community. Coordinated by Cheryl Tornquist, these ladies made 18 Christmas baby quilts and donated them to a local organization, Step by Step (a non-profit dedicated to supporting pregnant women through the pregnancy and in the baby's first year). They are now working toward the goal of 123 Valentine's quilts for the same organization, but another non-profit called Wishing Well Foundation (who support foster kids and parents in Pierce County).

Since the quilters can't meet in person, Cheryl is the contact and lets the ladies know what the needs are, and can provide fabric and batting if necessary. She leaves the supplies on her front porch for pick up and the finished quilts are returned to her porch. While they miss the fellowship of meeting at the church each week, they are determined to continue their ministry. //