



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.
 March 2021

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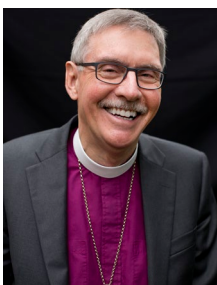
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Are You Ready to Have Your Life Changed?

by Bishop Richard Jaech, Synod Bishop



In the early centuries of the Christian church, Lent was a special time of preparation for those new Christians who were going to be baptized into the faith. All baptisms took place just once a year on Easter Eve. Those who were becoming Christian had already gone through a three-year period of instruction and spiritual guidance. The final forty days before Easter, what we now call the season of Lent, were an intense time of prayer, fasting, and study leading up to the moment of their baptism.

On Easter Eve, the whole Christian community would gather to celebrate the baptisms. Just before they walked down into the baptismal waters, those being baptized were asked two questions:

*Do you know that there is only one God?
 Are you ready to have your life changed?*

Two questions: The first asks if we know where the source, center, and focus of our life is. The second asks whether we are willing to let God change who we are and how we live.

Martin Luther once explained that our 'god' is whatever we trust to give us security, well-being and happiness. What do we think about, hope for, and depend on more than anything else? In the modern world, few of us are attracted to multiple religious gods, but we are very attracted to power, money, status, appearance, family respectability, success, relationships, political victory, and all the other 'powers' that take over our lives. They may be good and useful, but they're not God.

*Do you know that there is only one God?
 Are you ready to have your life changed?*

Our own baptisms may be long past, but Lent is once again an important time to ask the deep questions. Where is our life centered? Or, are we feeling very un-centered as we careen from task to task and from need to need in our chaotic world?

Are we ready to have our life changed? Or, have we grown discouraged and fear that no change is possible? Have we gotten stuck in a repeating pattern and are holding on for dear life?

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Luther's re-discovery of the priesthood of all believers! (*See the two books listed
Are you ready, continued from page 1

Are we ready to have our life changed? Or, have we grown discouraged and fear that no change is possible? Have we gotten stuck in a repeating pattern and are holding on for dear life?

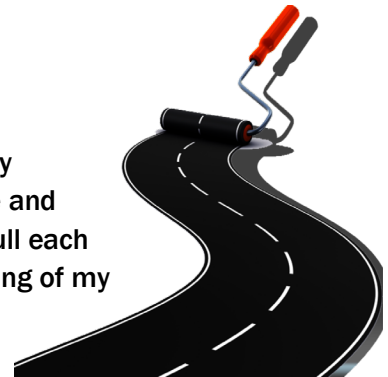
I invite you to plunge into the waters of Lent. Ask the deep questions. Remember that, at the end, comes Easter, with all the grace, life, and power that you could possibly want. Are you centering your life in God? Are you ready to have your life changed?

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech

On the Cyberspace Road with the Bishop

With the rest of the Synod Staff, I am mainly working from my home and limiting my road trips. However, my work schedule and the schedule of all the Synod Staff members has been very full each week, with lots of Zoom visits and meetings. Here is a sampling of my activities around the Synod in February:



- Feb. 3 Zoom meeting with pastors and deacons in our South Sound and Coastal conferences
- Feb. 3 Affordable Housing meeting with ten churches in our Synod
- Feb. 8 Religious leaders meeting with Governor Inslee
- Feb. 11 Faith Action Network Annual Advocacy Day in Olympia
- Feb. 12 Pacific Lutheran University Board of Regents meeting
- Feb. 15 Meeting with our Synod Native American Task Force
- Feb. 15 Gathering with all rostered leaders in specialized ministries: chaplains, PLU professors, counselors, hospice workers.

Congregations in Transition - March 2021

Lord, we pray for your wisdom, insight, and peace for these congregations the 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	Pr. Joe Aalbue
Christ, Federal Way	P	TR	Marietta Nelson-Bittle, SAM
Gloria Dei, Kelso	P	TR	Pr. Elten Zerby
Grace, Port Townsend	P	TR	Pr. Alan Berg
Messiah, Auburn	AP	TR	Pr. Chuck Harris
Mountain View, Edgewood	P	TR	Pr. Mike Greenwalt, Pr .Kim Latterell
Ocean Park, Ocean Park	P	TR	Louise Buckles, SAM
Prince of Peace, Forks	P	TR	Pr. 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

Calls accepted

Pastor Megan Filer has accepted the call as Pastor to **Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma** and will start in mid-April. Pastor Megan has served as Pastor at Bethany Lutheran in Longview since 2016.



*As Synod leadership we would like to amplify the variety of voices across the Southwestern Washington Synod, so we've started this monthly feature, **Synod Voices**. As a Church, we are facing challenging situations and finding creative, Spirit-led solutions to work for justice across the street and around the world. We choose to advocate for people of all identities and listen to diverse voices. Understanding who we are as a Synod helps us honor human dignity and create an authentically inclusive church.*

Each month we share answers to a list of questions by members of our diverse population in this synod. All of the [Synod Voices](https://lutheranssw.org/pages/synod-voices), including this month's with Pastor Sang Soo Kim, Senior Pastor at Light of Grace Korean Church in Federal Way can be found [here](https://lutheranssw.org/pages/synod-voices)

God Will Transform this Church



Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, ELCA Presiding Bishop

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. That's our name. At least two parts of our name, "Evangelical" and "Church," are either misunderstood or an outright stumbling block for a significant percentage of the American population.

Pew Research reports that over one-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third under 30—are religiously unaffiliated. These are the "nones." The religiously unaffiliated, whether never churched or dechurched, don't have a favorable impression of church. They see it as extremist, full of hypocrites, judgmental, anti-science, anti-intellectual, dogmatic, overly concerned about other people's morality, naïve and out of touch. Ouch.

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In the eyes of the nones, the ELCA gets lumped in with everyone else. Though we aren't perfect, and some of the characteristics of church apply to us at various times, we have a theology based on a liberating gospel of Jesus Christ that is the euangelion—the good news. The “Evangelical” in our name points to the transforming love of Jesus, to reconciliation, to freedom, to grace. It's expansive, for everyone and all creation. It doesn't require our effort or our merit, only our trust in God's promise.

It's not naïve. Scripture, Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others were clear-eyed about the reality of human sin and brokenness and the devastating consequences for individuals, groups of people and creation that result. There is judgment, but it is God's, not ours. Our evangelical understanding of God's word is that it is both law and gospel, judgment and promise. We aren't an everything goes, antinomian church.

I remember the light bulbs going off in my catechism students' heads when learning about grace. Does it give us license to do anything we want? Paul had to address the same line of thinking in the letter to the Romans. No. Grace makes it possible to be honest with ourselves and face our sin because the Spirit grants us the space, time and desire to turn from our sin to the source of life.

Our evangelical witness is full of paradox—we are simultaneously saint and sinner. Yes, there is hypocrisy in the church—welcome to humanity! But there is also beauty and love poured by the Spirit into sometimes stubborn and broken hearts. There is law and gospel. We are at once perfectly free and lord of all and bound and servant of all (Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian*).

Our evangelical witness is that God called the creation good; that we have been given the gift of curiosity that compels us to study the natural world, to engage in scientific research. The more we know about creation, the closer we draw to the Creator. We aren't anti-intellectual—Luther was a college professor after all.

I happen to know some millennials who had conversations with their none neighbors. These conversations were open and engaged. The none neighbors carried the above-mentioned perceptions of church, but they also knew that their millennial friends served as Young Adults in Global Mission and were active in their congregation. The nones were trying to reconcile their perceptions of church with their experience of actual Lutherans—one of whom is a scientist. Without that relationship, the nones would never have known a true evangelical witness to the liberating good news of Jesus.

In this issue you have read about Future Church (page 20). God is calling us into this exciting mission, and the Spirit will activate each of us to invite people to know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. The ELCA can hold up our evangelical

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witness, which is an alternative face of Christianity—not for institutional survival, but so that more people will experience the deep love of Jesus, be transformed and liberated by that love and “work for justice and peace” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Holy Baptism).

This mission will take all of us, and it means actual relationships with real people led by an incarnational God. I believe that God will transform this church.

*This column originally appeared in Living Lutheran’s March 2021 issue. Reprinted with permission.
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Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you during this season of Lent. It is a time when we, as Christians, reflect on our life together in Christ and the ways in which our identity in Christ is reflected in the world. Being able to articulate that identity can help guide us to a better understanding of ourselves and each other as God continues to call us to respond to the needs of the world.

There are many ways to reflect on our identity as Christians and Lutherans, one of which is by engaging each other across our global Lutheran family. As part of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), we seek to contribute our North American Lutheran perspectives to the larger Lutheran tapestry, made up of 77 million members across 99 countries! And like the ELCA, the LWF has a rich history of theological study processes that can help us better understand ourselves and what it means to be church.

In 2019, the LWF launched [a study process](#) to explore the ways our global Lutheran identities are lived out through biblical interpretation, worship and the work of justice, peace and reconciliation. As a member of the LWF, the ELCA is taking part in this unique
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Lutheran Identities Study, continued from page 6

study process in a number of ways as we examine our Lutheran identity in our own context here in North America. We hope this process will allow us to experience the diverse ways our Lutheran tradition is being lived out. This is an opportunity to discern the ways in which we, in our own contexts, express law and gospel, faith and works, nature and grace, justification and sanctification, freedom and vocation – all parts of our common theological identity.

This Lent, I invite you to reflect on your Christian and Lutheran identities by participating in the [Global Survey on Being Lutheran/Encuesta Mundial Sobre lo Que Significa Ser Luteran](#). We also ask that you invite others in your churches to participate. The survey will be open through March 31, and responses gathered will help to shape the 13th LWF Assembly in 2023.

In addition, between now and June you are invited to take part in a larger conversation that will transpire across the LWF communion. The LWF has produced a discussion guide titled [We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Welcome to a Global Conversation on Being Lutheran/Creemos en el Espíritu Santo: Bienvenido/a a una Encuesta Mundial Sobre lo Que Significa Ser Luterano/a](#). This guide will help lead your congregation's Christian education and/or youth group on a journey of mutual discovery and learning.

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences. They will contribute to furthering our understanding of what being Lutheran means in this time and place as we continue to journey together in Christ through these next 500 years of reformation.

With peace and gratitude,



Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Mark your calendar for **Sunday, Sept. 12**, when congregations of the ELCA will come together for **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**. Our church continues to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical distancing has changed the way we worship and serve. But the need is great, and God’s church is at work.

We’re not sure what the impact of this crisis will look like in September, but we continue to be church together. We are witnessing the outpouring of love and concern that God’s people have for one another. Our congregations continue to maintain feeding ministries, serve communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infection and assist people who are financially burdened by the economic downturn.

“[Service in the Time of COVID-19](#)” was developed to offer service project ideas and considerations for safely supporting your community in this time of pandemic.

As we gather together in service to our neighbors, we are reminded of one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: All of life in Jesus Christ — every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life — flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. Be sure to save the date and visit [ELCA.org/DayofService](https://www.elca.org/DayofService) for updates to our resources.

You work every day to make your community a better place. We look forward to working together with you on “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday.

Youth Leadership Training Day May 22nd

Join us for the Southwestern Washington Synod Youth Leadership Training Day on May 22, 2021. We will play games, learn and practice leadership skills, meet new friends from across our synod, worship together, and so much more! This virtual event is open for all current 8-12 grade youth.

Registration is open now! Share this link with your pastors, families, youth leaders, and youth: <https://forms.gle/rCQyV2fdJJvmX9mi8>

Cost:

Group/congregation registration - \$100** (covers as many youth as you would like to invite - send a check for payment made out to Southwest Washington Synod with ALYVE in the memo line, and mailed in no later than the week following the event)

Individual registration - \$40

Included in registration:

Access to Peer Ministry Training with Lyle Griner; a day of programming and activities (on Zoom and asynchronous); worship & music experiences exclusive for this day.

An integral piece of this leadership training is building relationships with each other, and practicing having 1-on-1 conversations. Therefore, you will be asked to keep your video camera on during our time together. Be sure to use a device that has a video camera and a wireless internet connection. For questions about this, contact your church's youth leader.

You will need:

A device you can access Zoom throughout the day - laptop or Chromebook is best, in order to see as many people as possible.

Schedule will be sent in May with the Zoom meeting ID.

**If you are registering multiple students, please submit one form for each student.

**Churches are required to have at least one adult participant with any youth participant in order to help them bring this experience back to your church as well as to connect with other synod leaders.

If you have any questions, contact the ALYVE board, swwaalyveboard@gmail.com. We are looking forward to seeing you in May!

River of Life ELCA VBS

When you think of ELCA World Hunger, do you think of Vacation Bible School? ELCA World Hunger has excellent VBS curriculum at no cost on their website. The 2021 curriculum is called “River of Life.” The program guides children to learn about how ELCA World Hunger partners with our neighbors around the world in clean water projects. This five-day program includes large group gatherings, small group activities, crafts and ideas for snacks. A guide to adapting the program for home use will be available sometime in late March or early April. Download the free program at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/VBS_River_of_Life_2021.pdf?_ga=2.23246970.15190119.1615215863-488237888.1612287583

Also available are previous year curricula (https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger?_ga=2.127004749.15190119.1615215863-488237888.1612287583#VBS)

ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant Applications

It's that time of year again: ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant Applications will soon become available. These grants are for three-year up to \$10,000 a year, that support a variety of hunger programs in our synod.

We know that the word “grant” can be intimidating to a lot of people. And the SW WA Synod Hunger Committee is here to help. In April we will be holding an online/zoom meeting to answer your questions about the grant process. In the meantime, we suggest that you start with the ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants website at <https://www.elca.org/domestichungergrants>. There, you will learn more about what the grants can—and cannot—fund, AND take the first important step: register to apply. The grant process is a two-step process. On March 17, registration will open. It can take up to TWO WEEKS for your registration to be approved, so register early. After your registration has been approved, you can complete your grant application.

We also recommend you look at the videos on this page highlighting programs that have received funding from ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants.

Then join us and other hunger ministries in Region 1 for Funding Your Hunger Ministry workshop on April 10th at 10-11:30am (a zoom link will be provided to those registered) as we explore needs of a successful program, how to apply for ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants and other funding opportunities.

This year, one of the funded ministries in our area is **Plateau Outreach Ministries** (POM). Based in Enumclaw, they provide help those in crisis, translating Christ’s call to “Love Thy Neighbor,” into action. POM focuses on basic needs: food, clothing, housing, emergency financial assistance and extended case management, including counseling referrals, for *continued next page*

Domestic Hunger Grants, continued from page 10

issues causing crises. They are one of the only service provider in the area, serving rural residents in rural King and Pierce County. They shared this story (the names have been changed):

With the forecast calling for days of snow and a chilly dip in the temperature, Jessica became worried. She was sure her neighbor Brian's* propane wouldn't last and her toes were beginning to feel more like ice cubes than anything else. Jessica* made a phone call and the voice on the other end, a voice full of trust and hope, encouraged her and Brian* to come in. But what about gas to get back? "No worries," the voice said, "we can take care of that too".*

When Jessica and Brian* arrived at POM, there was so much more than propane and gas vouchers waiting for them. A bag of food that could easily be prepared, foot warmers and socks and vouchers to get warm clothes at More Pennies From Heaven. A phone call later that day shared that they were using the footwarmers in their socks and hey, even a new hat too. "Gone was the feeling of being afraid of the storm and not being able to make it," a POM case manager said, "It was a personality change".*

Plateau Outreach Ministries has been working with Brian and Jessica since early in the pandemic, helping them access rental assistance while they worked out some difficulties with Brian's VA benefits. They are providing more than a bag of food, or even propane and gas: they are providing Brian and Jessica with hope. You can learn more about them, and Plateau Outreach Ministries at <https://www.plateauoutreach.org/impact/2021/2/26/this-was-a-big-heart-tugger-pom-case-manager>.

That is why our gifts to ELCA Hunger are SO important. They plant hope at home—and around the world. Thanks to all the congregations and individuals in the Southwestern Washington Synod, and across the country for making a difference!

You can make a difference too! Learn more about ELCA World Hunger and access resources for your congregation at <https://www.elca.org/hunger>

An Invitation to Dig Deeper - Getting to the root causes of a broken system

by Sandi Nolte, Living Stones Prison Congregation and Stepping Stones to Re-Entry

Many of us have experienced the transforming time of worshiping with the men of Living Stones. In them we see Christ and come to know these men as our brothers. We also come to understand there is much to be learned about what has brought them to this place—and that there are changes that need to happen in our criminal justice system.

Even before the traumatic events of the past few years, the ELCA began to address the *continued next page*

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need for changing public attitudes and postures, and to call for dramatic reforms in policies and practices in this system. In 2013 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted the ELCA social statement on *“The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries”* which presents a comprehensive perspective on these matters and the communities who are affected. While it affirms the principles of the U.S. criminal justice system, it also reveals the desperate cries that reflect the system’s serious deficiencies. It recognizes that many people in the system serve their professional vocations with competent and humane performance. It also recognizes that current approaches, such as the emphasis on mass incarceration, impose significant costs on all involved in the system and on society as a whole. These approaches are founded on an underlying punitive mindset and persistent inequalities based on race and class.

We encourage congregations to consider using the ELCA study *“Called to Hear”* to learn more about this issue. This scripture-based, expert-led, five-session study uses videos, handouts, Bible study, and discussion to explore this topic and be moved to action. Participants encounter a new way of listening to *Why are we called to care about our broken system? Who is crying out? How does God guide us to seek justice? What are some models of ministry? How can we advocate for change?*

The board of Stepping Stones to Re-entry is ready to help facilitate the study in your congregation (either in person or by Zoom) —or you can do it on your own. Contact Sandi at livingstonesassistant@outlook.com for details or go to <https://tinyurl.com/2mwehc68> for more information. The board members will lead a 1 hour workshop on this social statement at the Synod Assembly May 14th.

Lutheran Campus Ministry Sunday- May 2nd

The Lutheran Campus Ministries of Washington and Idaho are partnering up to offer all ELCA congregations a video worship service for May 2, 2021!

This video worship service will be available to all ELCA congregations to use on that or any other Sunday. It will feature Pastor Chelsea Globe (UW Lutherans), Pastor Joel Langholz (LCM at WWU), Pastor Arianna Arends (LCM at EWU) and Deacon Karla Neumann-Smiley (LCM at WSU and UofI), along with college students from these ministries.

Don’t need a full service? You can also choose to just use the elements you need: sermon, readings, prayers, etc. Keep an eye out for more information from your campus ministries and the Synod Office.

Will the ELCA's YAGM program re-start in 2022?

By Pastor Zach Courter

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program invites ELCA young adults ages 21-29 into a transformative, year-long journey in international service. As they offer themselves in service, ELCA young adults are shaped by the witness of our global neighbors. They share in the journeys of companion churches and organizations in one of ten countries around the world.

That is the hope! Of course we cannot know what the future holds, but there is lots of excitement and energy around making sure that the program re-starts as soon as it is safe and responsible to do so.

What does the closing of the program mean for Pastor Zach, Pastor Rachel & their daughter, Dorothy? Zach will wrap up his work with the YAGM program at the end of March. For the foreseeable future he will focus on taking care of Dorothy and supporting Rachel in her role as the European Desk Director for YAGM. Rachel will continue in her role as the ELCA's Desk Director for Europe, shepherding the ELCA's personnel and church engagement throughout Europe. Dorothy will continue growing faster than we can imagine, as well as being unbelievably sweet.

To continue to support these missionaries and/or support the YAGM program, supporting the YAGM program to hit the ground running as soon as it is safe to do so. You can support the YAGM program here: <https://community.elca.org/yagm/give> or for Pastor Zach and Pastor Rachel, you can continue to support our work as missionaries serving in central Europe here: <https://community.elca.org/MissionaryGiving>

40 Days of Giving

"For [God] did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; [God] did not hide [God's] face from me, but heard when I cried" (Psalm 22:24).

Around the world, 690 million people face hunger, and each of them has a story to tell. Hunger is rarely just a matter of lacking food. Rather, it is often a pernicious and persistent symptom of much deeper pain, of much deeper need.

For women and girls around the world, abuse, violence and inequality lie behind the higher rates of hunger they face. Globally, women are 13% more likely than men to experience food insecurity and almost 27% more likely to be severely food insecure. They are also more likely to be victimized by violence, more likely to do work with little or no pay, and less likely to have access to credit to start a home or business.

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If we are going to end hunger, we have to start by being honest about the stories of pain, exploitation, injustice and violence that lie behind it. We must start with honesty about what hunger is and what it is not.

Hunger is not accidental. It is the result of inequality, marginalization and injustice that inhibit one's ability to access the resources one needs to live.

Hunger is not merely the physical sensation of going without food. It is an insidious reality that affects the whole person — physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially.

Hunger is not merely a calculation of calories. It is a measure of the extent to which a person is constrained in the pursuit of their own well-being.

Ending hunger means being willing to enter into the sometimes-painful stories of neighbors in need. It requires that we accompany one another down difficult roads with honesty about what we may find.

For reflection questions see here

<https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/40Days-LentStudy-2021-Spreads.pdf>

Congregation News

Trinity Lutheran in Parkland (Tacoma) joins with PLU to host a weekly Prayers for the World via Zoom each Friday morning at 10:30am.

Did you know that **Family of Christ Lutheran in Vancouver** has been livestreaming their worship services for 3 years now? Since the pandemic, they have been able to update their equipment (no longer using their pastor's cell phone). Seems they may have been ahead of the game.