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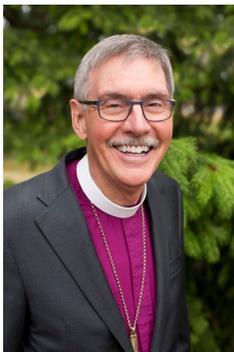
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Moments for Mission

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.
November 2022

The Spirit of Gratitude

By Bishop Rick Jaech, Southwestern Washington Synod



Dear Friends in Christ,

With Thanksgiving Day coming up this month, I think again of the recent Gospel lesson about Jesus healing the ten lepers, with one leper (a Samaritan) returning to give thanks.

A number of years back, Martin Bell wrote a book about Jesus called *The Way of the Wolf* and, in that book, he lets himself imagine why the other nine lepers didn't come back and say thank you to Jesus. No one knows for sure, but Martin Bell makes some guesses.

- One of them, he guesses, was so delirious with joy at being healed that he just went running through the villages praising God and he forgot to say thank you. He was so happy, he forgot.
- Another leper actually was a little offended that Jesus hadn't required him to do something difficult before he was healed. He was a person who liked to take care of himself. He wished that Jesus would have put him on a fasting and prayer routine for seven months as steps he could take towards healing. So, it was hard for him to just receive healing as a gift.
- Another leper had been separated from her family for 11 years by her leprosy, so the first thing she did was to rush home and hug her children. It was love that moved her.
- Another leper realized too late that he did not want to be healed. For so many years, all he could think about and all he could talk about was his sickness. He had totally identified himself and built his life around being a sick person. When Jesus healed him, he felt like he had lost who he was.

And so it went, says Martin Bell. All ten lepers were healed, but then they were moved by a variety of emotions and influences and "spirits" that shaped what they did next.

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Martin Luther, continued from page 1

Therefore, the question comes to us: what forces moves us? What spirits move us and shape how we live?

I use the word “spirit” in the way that word is used in Hebrew scripture. As you know, the Hebrew word for “spirit” is ruach. In Hebrew, ruach can mean breath; it can mean wind; and it can mean spirit. The Holy Spirit is the loving breath of God that breathes life into us each moment. With unlimited grace, the Spirit first fills us with life and then it also acts as a holy wind, a current of divine breath filling us with love and directing us on the best path. Sometimes we follow that Spirit and sometimes we don’t.

The world is a complicated and scary place right now with lots of conflict, vehement arguments, and things falling apart. In a scary and complicated world, it’s very possible that we will be mostly moved and shaped by our fears and worries. In a complicated world, we can also come to feel a kind of constant pessimism or a constant sense of being burdened. We begin to feel alone in the world and we imagine that the only way to survive is to take care of everything our self.

Those are the strong “spirits” of today: fear, pessimism, isolation, burden and hopelessness. Yet, daily Jesus comes to us and breathes into us a spirit of life and grace and love. With each breath, Jesus says to us, “Know that God always loves you and will never abandon you. Be filled with that love and share it with all around you and with creation itself.”

Then, Jesus also breathes into us a spirit of gratitude and says, “Let your eyes be opened to all the ways in which God is caring for you. Breathe in that breath of life that comes from God and then let yourself say thank you for what you have received.”

Some people have found it very helpful to practice daily rituals of gratitude that help them remember to say thank you. For example, one ritual of gratitude is this: each night, before you go to bed, think back over the day and choose three things for which you are thankful. It doesn’t mean that you have to ignore the things that happened that you didn’t like. You don’t have to be happy about everything. But, look for three things, small or big, and thank God for them.

There are two blessings that come from this. First, practicing gratitude breaks the hold that our fears and pessimism have on us and instead nurtures our ability to hope and give thanks. The second blessing is that, when we say “thank you” for something, we are reminding ourselves about the “you” to whom we are saying “thank you”. Giving thanks helps us to open ourselves and reconnect again with God.

We are not alone in this journey. God is with us, continually filling us with life and love, and bringing us into community with each other. Thank You!



Bishop Rick Jaech



On the Road with the Bishop



Sept. 26 – Oct. 1 Attended the Conference of Bishops meeting in Chicago. Pictured above are the synod bishops from across the ELCA and Presiding Bishop Eaton.

Oct. 8 Brought greetings to the Women of the ELCA Synod gathering held at Christ Lutheran, Federal Way, where their pastor Chavaleh Forgey, shown right, was the keynote.





Oct 9 Preached at Dungeness Valley Lutheran, Sequim, WA, *shown left*, where Pastor Russ Britton serves.



Oct. 16 Preached at the historic Elbe Evangelical Lutheran Church at the foot of Mt. Rainier, where according to tradition, the bishop always arrives by bicycle *shown above left*. A family from India visited the church that day, *shown above right*.



Oct. 23 Preached at Family of Christ Lutheran in Vancouver, WA, *shown left*, where Pastor Kit Neeley serves.

Congregations in Transition -November 2022

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

Congregations	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
Celebration, Puyallup	P	NV	Pulpit supply
Elim, Port Orchard	P	TR	Pr. Mike Hanson
Gloria Dei, Olympia	P	TR	Pr. Dan Wilson; Deacon SAM Carla Spaccarotelli
Gloria Dei, Tacoma	P	NV	Pr John Clauson, Pulpit Supply
Key Peninsula, Lakebay	P	NV	Pulpit Supply
Living Stones Prison Congregation, WCC Shelton	P	TR	Pr. Eric Utto-Galarneau
Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma	P	TR	Pr, Pamela Griffith Pond and Pr. Kim Latterell
Messiah, Vancouver	P	TR	Pr. David Brauer-Rieke, Pr. Tom Tweed
Prince of Peace, Forks	P	TR	Don Corson, SAM
St Paul, Winlock	P	NV	Pulpit Supply
Trinity, Parkland	P	TR	Pr. Jonette Blakney/Pr. Ron Kempe
Twin Harbors, Grayland	P	NV	Pulpit Supply

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

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

Calls

- Pastor Kyle Merkle has been called as Pastor at Calvary Lutheran, Federal Way.
- Bergen Eickhoff has been called as Associate Pastor at The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd, Olympia. Bergen's ordination/installation will be in December. We'll send out a notice when the date has been finalized.

Synod Antiracism Work Team

Did you know that your Southwestern Washington Synod has an Antiracism Work Team? The answer is Yes! The Antiracism Work Team (AWT) has been around for about 2 1/2 years meeting monthly. We began as a call from Bishop Jaech to form a team to bring awareness as to how racism/white supremacy lives in our state, synod, and congregations.

Our first task was to do a study recommended by Denise Powell, *The Racial Healing Handbook*. By using a single study guide, we were able to have a similar foundation on which we could examine how racism and white power & privilege works in our world and its impact on white folks and our siblings of color.

Additionally, we have been searching ways to be a resource to our synod and its congregations as we examine how racism winds its way into how we worship, how we think and how it keeps us from living out Christ's call to love one another.

During the next few newsletters, we'll share opportunities for you and your congregation to engage with us!

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Kathy Long, Chair, AWT Member of Dungeness Valley Lutheran in Sequim
<mailto:mkatherineblong@gmail.com>

We Are Woven Together

By ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



He was a young man. In his early 20s. He had cancer. His mother and stepfather cared for him to the point of weariness. The family was unchurched, but a friend was a member of our parish and asked if I could visit them. That's how I came to walk with them in the last months.

There were hospitalizations and finally palliative care. The young man endured with stoic courage. His mother and stepfather never waived in their care. Friends supported the family by bringing meals and sometimes just sitting in silence with them. At last, the call I knew was coming came. The young man had died.

I drove to the farmhouse past the cemetery where he would be buried. When I arrived the stepfather opened the door and motioned me to the living room. The young man had died in his mother's arms. He had stopped shaving some weeks before, so his beard had grown in. Mother cradling the body of her dead son. It was a modern-day pietà.

In my time with the family, I found out that the stepfather was not baptized. I'll call him Jim. We had many talks sitting at the wooden kitchen table—some profound, some less so.

Continued next page

Woven Together, continued from page 6

And Jim had questions: not so much why this had happened to his stepson, but where was God? Where was hope? He knew his wife and son had been baptized. Jim wanted to know what that meant, what difference it made.

I answered that God was with Jim's stepson in his pain. I explained that baptism was the gift of life that brought forgiveness, that baptism made us part of the body of Christ, the church, and that baptism made those who had been strangers from God and each other part of the same family. I told him that baptism was an unbreakable relationship between God and God's people because God loves us and doesn't want to lose a single one of us, that not even death can separate us from God's love.

Jim asked to be baptized. He came to the realization that, as it has been said, water really is thicker than blood. Baptism doesn't guarantee a life without struggle or hardship, but it makes us part of the one who suffered, died and was buried—and who, through that suffering and death, defeated death. So, at that wooden kitchen table with a stainless steel mixing bowl filled with water, Jim was baptized into Christ.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was

raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Romans 6:3-5).

We have been through a difficult season in our country and our church. I'm not sure if we will ever
Continued next page

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completely understand the effects of the pandemic's stress on all of us. The pandemic laid bare racial inequities and disparities in access to medical care, housing, employment and law enforcement. Civic discourse has become coarse and mean. Life is seen as a zero-sum game—if your side gets something then mine loses out.

This is also played out in the church. Of course there is room for debate and disagreement, there is room to call out one part of the church when it has hurt another. There is even room for justified anger. But there is no room to dissolve the bond of baptism. It isn't even possible. In Christ we are individually members one of another. Sometimes we might feel like we are stuck with each other. This is the great mystery and beauty of the wounded body of Christ—we are woven together. Praise the One who makes us one.

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her email address is bishop@elca.org. This column originally appeared in Living Lutheran's September 2022 issue. Reprinted with permission.

PLU | CAMPUS MINISTRY

Continuing the work of Campus Ministry at PLU

PLU Campus Ministry is off and running for fall semester, reconnecting with continuing students and meeting new Lutes. There is good energy. Every new year and season brings its changes, and this fall we've made a few changes in Campus Ministry programming and the ways Campus Ministry is contributing to PLU's mission and care for the spiritual development of students and community. It's a time of ongoing reformation, ministry, and hopefully transformation, too!

In particular, we've been in discernment since 2015 about University Congregation, the Sunday student worshipping community, in light of the changing needs of students and the campus community. We've been prayerfully considering our energy, resources, values, and opportunities. This process has included both loss and possibility. As a result of this process we have decided to sunset University Congregation.

Though we will no longer have a Sunday service on campus, we will still gather in community for three chapel services each week. We will still support students' faith and spirituality. We will still

live out our values to be LGBTQIA+ affirming, committed to anti-racism work, and celebrating and supporting religious and spiritual diversity.

This has not been a quick or isolated decision. Discernment partners in this process have included Southwestern Washington Synod Bishop Rick Jaech, VP for Student Life Joanna Royce-Davis, the student Campus Ministry staff team, and others.

Some of the *Why* behind this change:

- Our students are changing - fewer students are choosing to attend a worshipping community (similar to trends nationwide).
- Our student body is more hyper-local, meaning students who are engaged in congregations in the community stay connected to those communities throughout their time at PLU.
- Demographics of PLU students are changing - University Congregation has continued to be almost exclusively white while our student body is 40% students of color.
- We have fewer financial and human resources to sustain a Sunday worship community.
- We are not wanting to duplicate - there is a worshipping community across the street from PLU at Trinity Lutheran. Also, there are many other local congregations who do worship well and would love to have students! This is an opportunity for PLU students to be more community engaged, to bless local church communities with their presence, and to benefit from the intergenerational nature of these congregations.

Letting University Congregation sunset gives us space and resources to focus on our strengths as a college Campus Ministry and what is unique about our context. For example, gatherings like our Anti-Racism and Whiteness conversation connected to faith, Queer Faith series, decolonizing scripture bible study, etc.

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PLU Campus Ministry continued from page 7

In terms of worship and spiritual gathering, we continue Chapel three times a week, creatively engaging in spiritual practices, prayer, reflection, communion, and community. And through Campus Ministry we also continue various topical series, discussion groups, retreats, hikes, pastoral care, education around religious and spiritual diversity and more. There is a lot of creative energy and like many of you we continue to be in a season of experimenting as we seek to love God, love neighbor, and love ourselves in this ever-evolving context. I continue to be grateful and energized in this work.

Thank you for your partnership.

With gratitude,

Pastor Jen Rude
University Pastor, PLU

Rising to Meet Antisemitism

Oct 25, 2022 by Rev. Terry Kyllö, Paths to Understand, Seattle



Last spring I was honored to interview Devin Burghart from IREHR, the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights. We spoke about white nationalism and white Christian nationalism, how it threatens our democracy, and what we can do about it. This conversation has been much on my mind as we have seen Antisemitic statements, movements, and violence against our Jewish neighbors on a terrible, upward trajectory.

I asked Devin about the narrative world that drives white nationalism and Christian nationalism. Essentially the story goes like this:

- Elites are threatening you from above
- People of color are trying to take what you have from below

These movements place our Jewish neighbors in the role of the elites, as running everything. As one commentator said, if Kanye West gets away with his Antisemitic statements Antisemitism gets worse. If he loses his contracts, then people can assume their toxic conspiracy theory is correct. That is the way conspiracy theories work. When you hear this basic narrative on your favorite news network or from your friends on Facebook, understand that they are repeating this nationalist narrative.

The combination of social media, hate group messaging, and statements by politicians are all
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Rising to Meet Anti-Semitism, continued from page 9

adding fuel to Antisemitism. Built on centuries of bias and bigotry and fed by the anxieties of our times, violence against many minority groups is on the rise. I left pastoral ministry in 2016 to join efforts to counter the dehumanization of Muslim Americans. I knew that the toxic dynamic of hate would lead to more hate against other groups, including our Jewish neighbors.

As a practicing Christian, I continue to be aware of the work Christians must do to counter Antisemitism. Christians, I feel, must engage in an ongoing evaluation of how our practice of our tradition enables Antisemitism. This includes everything from how we tell our story of origin, how we interpret Jesus' debates with his own community, to more respectfully naming our scriptures the Christian Scriptures instead of a "New Testament" which implies that Christianity replaced the Judaism. We are doing some of this work in our course *Let's Go Together*.

This work must also include sermons, education, and public statements to counter Antisemitism, Anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, and racist beliefs of all kinds. When Christians are silent we contribute to a dynamic that threatens physical, emotional, and spiritual harm to our neighbors. At PTU (Paths to Understand), we are preparing for the vigil and funeral of Father William Treacy, one of our founders. He was profoundly changed by his relationship with Rabbi Raphael Levine. Father Treacy learned to debate with the Rabbi, to address issues as an equal, and to take risks to stand with and behind his friend. I hope to continue to learn from his example – rising to counter the nationalist narrative that is trying to tear us part.

You can listen to my conversation with Devin here: <https://youtu.be/mmK2PrCZHLc>

Upcoming Conferences

2023 Bishop's Convocation for Rostered Clergy and Deacons

Tuesday, January 17-Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at Seabeck Conference Center

"Intersections between Native American religious traditions and Christian traditions"

Keynote Speaker: Suzanne Crawford O'Brien PhD, PLU Professor of Religion and Culture; Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies.

Registration link will be emailed to rostered ministers in our synod next week.



Byberg Preaching Workshop

January 23-25, 2023 in Seaside Oregon.

The 2023 main speaker is Rev. Traci Blackmon. Rev. Blackmon is the Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO.

REGISTRATION: The registration process begins by going to bybergpreachingworkshop.com.

Registration deadline: December 15, 2022

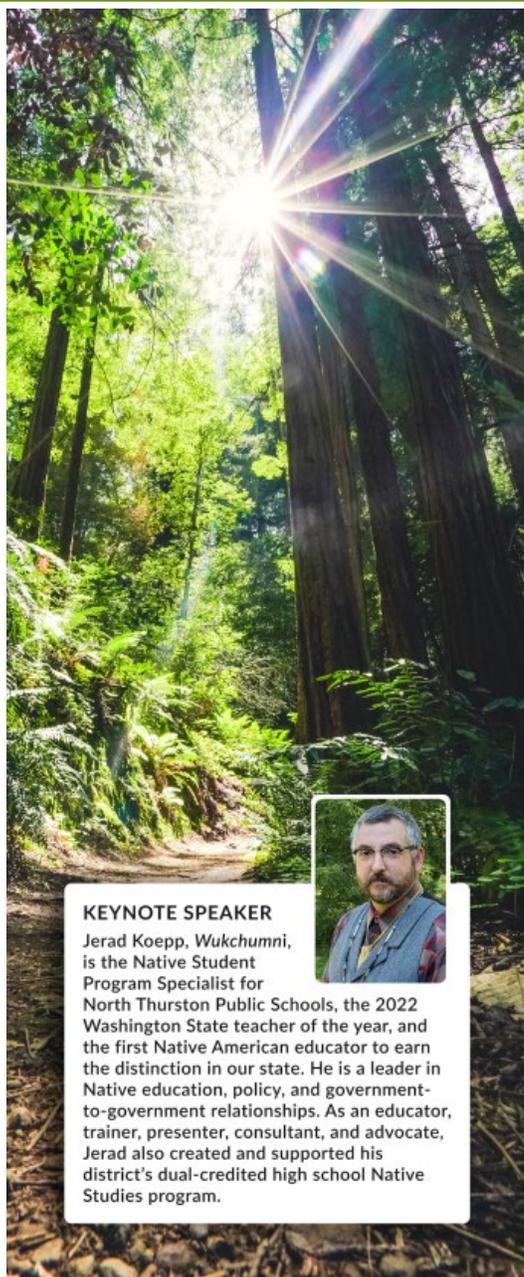
ELEA National Conference in Seattle in 2023



ELEA (Evangelical Lutheran Education Association) serves ELCA schools and learning centers by offering resources and services to support faith-based schools and centers. ELEA is holding their 2023 National Conference in collaboration with ELCA Region 1 at

the Doubletree Southcenter in Seattle March 8-10, 2023. The theme is "Make It Count".

<https://elcaschools.org/>



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jerad Koepf, *Wukchumni*, is the Native Student Program Specialist for North Thurston Public Schools, the 2022 Washington State teacher of the year, and the first Native American educator to earn the distinction in our state. He is a leader in Native education, policy, and government-to-government relationships. As an educator, trainer, presenter, consultant, and advocate, Jerad also created and supported his district's dual-credited high school Native Studies program.



RESETTING OUR SACRED TABLE

The Path of Healing

You are invited to this year's interfaith celebration of community, "Resetting Our Sacred Table."

This year's event will feature speakers and musical contributions from the diverse membership of the Interfaith Works faith communities and affiliated organizations.

Our theme this year is The Path of Healing. This theme holds space for learning and sharing how our communities understand and celebrate healing, even when that healing involves pain, such as the healing that comes through sustained anti-racist and decolonization work.

This is a free event and all are welcome.

SUNDAY

November 20, 2022

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Temple Beth Hatfiloh
201 8th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501

ZOOM

This event is also available on Zoom.

[JOIN US ON ZOOM](#)



Visit us online for more information.
Interfaith-Works.org/Events

Congregation News

Creating Children's Space in the Sanctuary

by Pastor Briana Merkle, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood WA

A few months ago, I had some of our children gathered around the altar in the sanctuary during a Holy Communion retreat. As I encouraged them to get close to the altar so we could look at the communion elements, one child exclaimed, "I've never gotten to come up here before!" Their words captured a sense of the holy but also noted a distance from this sacred table as well.



As children walk into the sanctuary, many of them probably feel as if the space is somehow 'off limits.' While it's vital to teach our kids worship etiquette, we also want to teach them that this space and time is for them to encounter God, for them to touch and see and explore faith. This is their sanctuary!

At Mountain View, this desire led to conversation with a team of parents, youth mentors and worship enthusiasts to identify ways we can encourage our children to

participate in worship with heart, mind, body and soul. One outcome has been the creation of a children's space in our sanctuary. This involved removing some chairs to make space for a rug and



children's furniture. We chose to put our children's space "at the heart" of our congregation and worship experience, and we chose a rug symbolic of our baptismal font. Families sit near this area and children have quickly come to inhabit the space and truly make it their own. The children's message is offered from here, and then children participate in a worshipful activity during the sermon to help them receive God's Word that day. The goal is not only to offer a welcoming space in the Sanctuary, but to use

that space to help our kids worship in ways that are meaningful to them.

This is an experimental project, we are still learning about how it best serves our community. We welcome conversation with others who have or would like to experiment with encouraging children to worship.

Zion Camas, Washington - Celebrating 125 Years

May 9th, 1897 is the founding date of Zion Lutheran Church in Camas, WA. The members of Zion are celebrating their 125th Anniversary as a congregation with numerous special events.

On Sunday, November 20th the Zion congregation will gather for a potluck meal at 11:30 AM, immediately following their worship service at 10am.

Since this is the Sunday before Thanksgiving, the theme for this event is "Giving Thanks for 125 Years at Zion Lutheran Church." Please join us for this special celebration of 125 years of worship, service, and fellowship at Zion. All are welcome!

Pr. Chris Hogstad, shown above right, welcomes you with a smile.



Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Port

Orchard is hosting a Diabetes Education Event on November 12th from 9am-Noon. All are welcome. The church address is 8730 Phillips Rd SE
Port Orchard, WA 98367-8552

Congregation Job Openings

See a list of job opportunities within our synod congregations on the synod's website at: <https://swwasynod.org/congregational-resources/job-opportunities/>

Synod Calendar

First Call Theological Education Event-
November 14-17

Under 45 Rostered Leaders Gathering, Jan 16-18, 2023

NOVEMBER IS
**Diabetes
Awareness
Month**

Want to learn more
about diabetes care and
treatment?

November 12
9am-4pm

**A FREE event where you can
meet experts who can help you
learn more about diabetes**

Call 360-908-6487 to register
8730 Phillips Rd SE

Bishop's Convocation for rostered ministers, Jan 18-19

ELEA National Conference, Doubletree Southcenter, Seattle – March 8-10

2023 Synod Assembly, Messiah Lutheran Church, Auburn May 5-6 //