



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 2023

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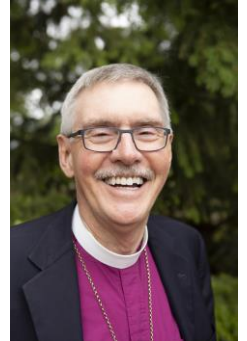
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The Gift of Democracy and the Office of Citizen

By Synod Bishop Rick Jaech



Dear Friends in Christ,

Reformation Day and Election Day regularly fall close to each other this time of year in our country. This coming Tuesday, October 31, is Reformation Day and the following Tuesday, November 7, is Election Day.

The gifts of the Reformation are many, but as I write this newsletter, I find myself thinking about Luther's perspective on government and being a citizen. It's important to notice that Luther's views about being a citizen spring out of his then-revolutionary affirmation of "the priesthood of all believers". In Luther's day, society viewed people as having lives of meaning and worth only if they were "close" to God because of their righteous, spiritual work (nuns, priests and popes), or because they had high social ranking and power (princes, bankers and emperors.) In his reading of St. Paul and the Gospels, Luther re-discovered that we are all equally valued and cherished by God, not because of what we do or who we are socially, but because God unconditionally loves and prizes each one of us. Luther then went on to say that, just as we are all equally loved by God, so we are also given lives of equal meaning and purpose. From the first moment of our baptism, we all become priests, called and empowered to serve and care for others as God has cared for us.

The exact form of our priesthood depends on the context of our lives and what we are specifically called to do. Luther used the term "office" to describe the different vocations we take on. We might use the term "role". We live out our priestly faith and love in the variety of offices and roles we play in our lives: parent, schoolteacher, farmer, nurse, business worker, pastor. And, yes, the "office" of both citizen and government leader are among the roles that Luther identifies as part of God's royal priesthood.

Luther was still very much shaped by the sixteenth century society around him that was just emerging from feudalism. Therefore, he did not leap immediately into full-scale democracy. However, the rights and duties that he proposes for common people and their government leaders are quite stunning.

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The Gift of Democracy and the Office of Citizen, *continued from Page 1*

As cities in Germany became “Lutheran”, they welcomed advice from Luther about how to re-form their government structures so that they would better reflect God’s equal, life-changing love. In response, and for the first time in Europe’s history, Luther mobilized local governments to: (1) Establish and financially support **free schools open to all boys and girls**. (2) **Establish a social assistance program** that would provide material help to people in crisis (widows, the ill, the unemployed.) This welfare program or “community chest” would be equally administered by a balanced leadership group of two nobles, two city council leaders, three town citizens and three peasant farmers. Democracy was truly emerging out of Luther’s re-discovery of the priesthood of all believers. The office of “citizen” became a holy calling! (For much more information about this, see Dr. Torvend’s book listed below,)

There is obviously much more to explore about Luther, but I want to return to the issue that led me to think about his perspectives on citizenship, namely our local elections coming up and the national elections a year from now that are already drawing much attention. It is easy to feel cynical about the political process and the caustic campaigning that takes place. Many Americans wonder about the future health of our country.

In the face of that turmoil, reading Luther has encouraged me to see again how the office of being a citizen is part of our priesthood as God’s people. It’s true that American democracy is still an experiment in the process of being developed. We groan at its limits and imperfections. Luther himself was blinded by his tragic and wrong prejudice against the Jewish community. Growth is needed in all of us.

However, being an active citizen is a holy calling. In the same way that parents care for children, God is working through us as citizens to care for our nation and the world, and to bring grace, blessing, and justice to all.

So, Luther would say to us, **VOTE!** Tell everybody you know to vote! Make sure everyone has the right and access to vote. The election of leaders is, of course, an important part of democracy. By their skill, values and vision, leaders guide and shape our nation, cities and states. Therefore, it’s good that we spend time debating and voting on who will lead us.

However, we make a big mistake if we think that our leaders are going to figure everything out and fix everything by themselves. The world is way too complicated for any one leader to have all the answers and solve every dilemma. Democracy only succeeds when we citizens stay involved in discussions, planning, and actions as each new challenge is faced. Fair, collaborative decision-making is an on-going element of democracy that we are still learning to use.

We also have an important ministry of healing and reconciliation to do. So much anger, bitterness and violence is evident throughout our country. Therefore, our ministry as citizens must include bringing all people together and rebuilding a sense of community, even as we make complicated decisions as a nation.

I urge you to engage in the gift of democracy and the office of citizen that God has granted to us. May God bless and guide us as we enter a new chapter in our journey together as a nation.

Bishop Rick Jaech

P.S. Here are books I have enjoyed that connect our Lutheran tradition and citizenship: Samuel Torvend, *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*, (Fortress Press); Timothy Lull and Derek Nelson, *Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther* (Fortress Press); Carter Lindberg and Paul Wee, editors, *The Forgotten Luther: Reclaiming the Social-Economic Dimension of the Reformation* (Lutheran University Press).



On the Road with the Bishop



Sept. 25-30

Attending the autumn Conference of Bishops meeting at the ELCA offices in Chicago. Pictured with me are the five newly elected bishops, together with our Bishops Formation Committee, on which I serve.

October 1

Preaching at Peace Lutheran, Puyallup, where Pastor Nate Sutton serves.



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October 7

Attending and presiding at the Installation of Bishop Meggan Manlove, who is the newly elected Bishop of the Northwest Intermountain Synod. The Installation took place at First United Methodist Church in Boise, Idaho.



October 14

Attending the Women of the ELCA Synod gathering at Bethany Lutheran Church in Longview. In this photo, I am standing with the WELCA Executive Committee.

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October 15

Celebrating the Ordination of Deacon Andrew Larsen, who serves as the Program Manager of the ELCA Compelling Preaching program. The Ordination took place at St. Mark's by the Narrows Lutheran Church in Tacoma. Although Deacon Andrew works for ELCA churchwide, we are happy to have him sharing one of our office rooms at the Synod Office.

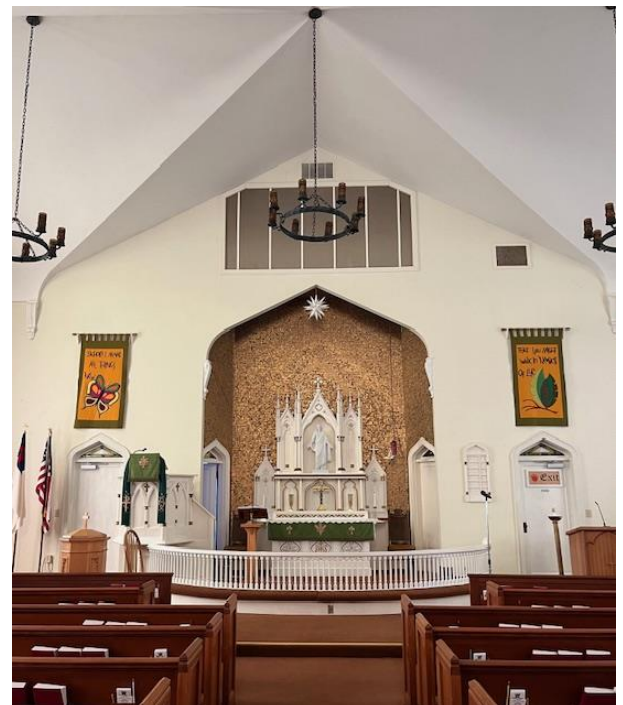
October 21

Stopping at a grocery store in Olympia on my way to Hoquiam, I was delighted to spot a car in the parking lot with a sticker telling about Good Shepherd Lutheran, Olympia, and announcing its welcome to all. Let's all share our story with our community!



October 22

Preaching at Saron Lutheran – 1st Presbyterian Church in Hoquiam where Pastor Michelle De Beauchamp serves.



Congregations in Transition – November 2023

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
Agnus Dei, Gig Harbor	P	NV	Rev. Kim Latterell, Rev. Tom Aitken
Celebration, Puyallup	P	I	Rev. Chris Boerger
Dungeness Valley, Sequim	P	NV	Rev. Pamela Griffith Pond
Elim, Port Orchard	P	I	Rev. Mike Hanson
Gloria Dei, Tacoma	P	TR	Rev. John Schier-Hanson as Bridge Pastor
Living Stones Prison Congregation, WCC Shelton	P	TR	Rev. Eric Utto-Galarneau
Messiah, Vancouver	P	I	Rev. David Brauer-Rieke, Rev. Tom Tweed
Mt. Cross, University Place	P	TR	Rev. Jeff Gaustad
Spanaway, Spanaway	P	TR	Rev. Ron Kempe, Deacon Traci Vatne
St. Mark's by the Narrows, Tacoma	P	TR	Rev. Audrey Lukasak, Rev. Mark Gravrock
St. Paul, Winlock	P	TR	Rev. Paul Hermansen
Twin Harbors, Grayland	P	TR	Rev. Amanda Sullivan-Kersey

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*

Newly Called Ministers in Our Synod

- Deacon Andrew W. Larsen** ELCA Churchwide, called through the Synod Council to serve as Program Manager of the ELCA Transformed Listeners Initiative
- Pastor Julie Hutson** called by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Olympia to serve as Pastor
- Pastor Jessie McKenzie** called by Lutheran Church of Christ the King in Tacoma to serve as Pastor

Synod Calendar

Dec. 5	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 7	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 12	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 14	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders,
Jan. 14 – 16	Under 45 Rostered Leaders Gathering, Seabeck Conference Center
Jan. 16 – 17	Bishop's Convocation for Rostered Leaders, Seabeck Conference Center
Jan. 22 – 24	Byberg Preaching Workshop, Seaside, OR

Upcoming Conferences

2024 Bishop's Convocation for Rostered Clergy and Deacons

Tuesday, January 16 through
Wednesday, January 17, 2023
at Seabeck Conference Center

Creative Partnership: The Necessity and Joy of Collaboration



A number of congregations, pastors and deacons in our Synod have entered into creative partnerships with other Lutheran congregations, ecumenical partners, neighborhood groups and government agencies. Walking the road alone can be exhausting and isolating. Walking the road together is crucial and Spirit-filled. At the convocation, you will have opportunity to hear from your colleagues about these partnerships and think together about your own possibilities for creative collaboration.

Registration information is coming soon!

Byberg Preaching Workshop

January 22-24, 2024

Seaside, Oregon

Presenter: Dr. Shauna Hannan, Professor of Homiletics Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Chaplain: Rev. Liv Larson Andrews, DEM, Northwest Intermountain Synod

Hosted at: Best Western Seaside

Calling on all preaching colleagues of the Pacific Northwest to join in the annual Byberg Preaching Workshop in beautiful Seaside, Oregon. We have invited Dr. Shauna Hannan back to lead us in conversations focused on preaching and communicating in our changed environment. We have also solicited the wonderful worship talents of Rev. Liv Larson Andrews to be our chaplain for the week. Cost for the event is \$195 (\$100/interns) and hotel rooms range from \$87-\$197. Registration will be open from September 1 – December 15, 2023. Cancellation requests need to be made by December 15, 2023.

Please visit www.bybergpreachingworkshop.com for registration links and more information. This is a twostep registration process. One step is to register for the program and the second step is to register for housing with the hotel.

Congregation Job Openings

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

Lay Minister St. Paul Lutheran Church, Vancouver
Church Musician Immanuel Lutheran Church, Vancouver
Youth Ministries Director Zion Lutheran Church, Camas
Director for Evangelical Mission Montana Synod

If you have a job opportunity and would like us to post it within our publicity channels, please email a job description to swwsynod@plu.edu. Your posts will remain active for three weeks, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Southwestern Washington Synod 2024 Compensation Guidelines

We have released the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers. You can find a digital copy [here](#) or contact us at 253-535-8300/ email swwsynod@plu.edu to request a paper copy.

ELCA News

ELCA presiding bishop issues statement on Israel-Hamas war

10/13/2023 12:00:00 PM

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?" —Psalm 22:1

Dear church,

As Lutherans, we are accustomed to holding tension between two truths. Thus the ELCA denounces the egregious acts of Hamas, acts that have led to unspeakable loss of life and hope. At the same time the ELCA denounces the indiscriminate retaliation of Israel against the Palestinian people, both Christian and Muslim.

For the past week we have borne witness to the horrors of the escalating crisis between Israel and Hamas. We also watch a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza as Israel blocks food, water, fuel and medical supplies and as airstrikes continue to cause unbearable civilian casualties ahead of a just-announced ground assault. We see Israelis and families around the world in the agonizing wait for word about the fate of loved ones killed or taken hostage by Hamas. We are in anguish, grieving and praying for all people who are living in trauma, fear and uncertainty.

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ELCA presiding bishop statement in Israel-Hamas war, *continued from Page 8*

Among us are Palestinian Lutherans who are fearful for their families, their communities and their homeland. In our communities we have Jewish and Muslim neighbors, who are also facing the horrors of this crisis and its impact on their loved ones.

It is difficult to find words that suffice in the complexity of this moment, and in the web of relationships that bind us together, as church, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and our interreligious partners. Yet God has called us to be a people who stand with others amid suffering.

We must also call a thing a thing. The power exerted against all Palestinian people – through the occupation, the expansion of settlements and the escalating violence – must be called out as a root cause of what we are witnessing. We are committed to our long-standing accompaniment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

The God who liberates us calls us to be a liberating witness. May it be so.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Truth & Healing Movement

The ELCA's [Truth & Healing Movement](#) is an opportunity for this church to increase our understanding of our colonizing impacts on Indigenous people in the past and present. Over the next several months, there will be opportunities to learn, raise awareness and engage in other ways to impact hearts and lives across this church. We believe that the truth, and our knowing and embracing it, is the first step toward healing for all of us.

Visit the Truth and Healing Movement page to learn more, get involved and share the Truth and Healing movement with others. Follow our ELCA and Living Lutheran social media channels for more stories and updates.