



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.

December 2023

Staff

Bishop Richard E. Jaech

Rev. Rebecca Shjerven
bishop's associate

Joey Ager
*bishop's associate/director
for evangelical mission*

Stefanie DeZarn
synod administrator

Office Phone
(253) 535-8300

Office Hours
Tue – Fri
9 am – 4 pm

Mailing Address
420 121st St. S
Tacoma, WA 98444

E-mail
swwasynod@plu.edu

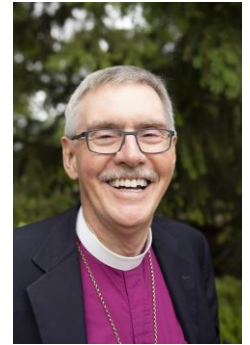
Synod Website
www.swwasynod.org

ELCA Website
www.elca.org

Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/SWWASynod>

Twitter
@SWWASynod

From the Bishop



Dear Friends in Christ,

It's Advent season and, for four weeks, we will enjoy seeing altar paraments and candles that are a deep and beautiful blue. This deep color of Advent makes me think of a number of things all at once.

Dark, rich blue makes me think of the night sky above Bethlehem and of the child, Jesus, waiting to be born. We are drawn to follow the path of Mary and Joseph as they are led to that holy place of birth.

Dark, rich blue is also the color of mystery and change. God is stirring up something new for us, but it is still partly hidden in the rich night of Advent. At this time of year, children will regularly ask their parents, "What am I getting for Christmas this year? What's inside the wrapped present?" We can also be asking God, "What are you about to present to us, O Lord? What are you cooking up for us right now?" Advent is a season of mystery and unfolding. It draws us in to see what God is about to do next, both for us and for the whole world.

The deep blue also makes me think of a deep, clear, flowing river that you can look down into and see all kinds of shimmering shapes. The season of Advent brings to mind the waters of birth and also the waters of Holy Baptism. God is coming to us with a river of healing and grace. It is not just Jesus who is about to be born. God is also in the process of bringing new birth and new life to each one of us. In the same way that you look into the water and see your reflection, look into the deep blue of Advent and see your self being formed as a new person.

Around us at this time of year are flashing lights, excited voices, clanging cash registers, and frantic rushing. Christmas sometimes becomes a sprint to the finish line followed by exhaustion.

With its deep, blue color, Advent invites us to step out of the frantic rush and, instead, retreat into a quiet and reflective place of waiting. Like bears in a cave, Advent calls us to hibernate, heal, and rest, while new life forms within us.

...continued next page

My advice for all of us is to set aside as many moments as possible in the weeks ahead to peer into to the deep, mysterious blue of Advent. Sit there on the edge of night and search among the shadows and the stars that are around us and within us. God is forming something new and beautiful for us. What exactly will it be this year...?

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech



Dear LORD,

AS DECEMBER UNFOLDS, WE THANK YOU FOR THE BLESSINGS OF THE YEAR. IN THIS SEASON OF JOY, GUIDE OUR ACTIONS AND THOUGHTS. GIVE US STRENGTH TO FINISH THE YEAR WELL, BALANCING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH MOMENTS OF REST.

WE PRAY FOR COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO FEEL ALONE AND ASK THAT WE CAN BE A SOURCE OF YOUR LOVE FOR THEM. KEEP OUR FAMILIES SAFE AND LET KINDNESS LEAD OUR CONVERSATIONS.

GUIDE US INTO THE NEW YEAR WITH YOUR WISDOM AND HELP US TO LOVE OUT THE DREAMS YOU HAVE PLACED IN OUR HEARTS. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF YOUR SON, JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOPE HE BRINGS TO every Day.

IN HIS PRECIOUS NAME WE PRAY.
AMEN.

All of us here at the Southwestern Washington Synod wish you a blessed Advent Season, a peaceful Christmas, and a great start into the new year 2024!

Peace, Love and Joy!



On the Road with the Bishop



October 29

Preaching at the Reformation Sunday service attended by all of the congregations in our Lower Columbia Conference; St. Paul, Castle Rock; Gloria Dei, Kelso; Bethany, Longview; Stella Lutheran, Stella; Trinity, Longview; and St. Paul, Winlock. The service was held at Trinity, Longview.



...continued next page



November 4

Ordaining Deacon Carla Spaccarotelli as a Minister of Word and Service. Deacon Spaccarotelli serves as a chaplain at Providence St. Peter's Hospital in Olympia. The service was held at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Olympia.



...continued next page

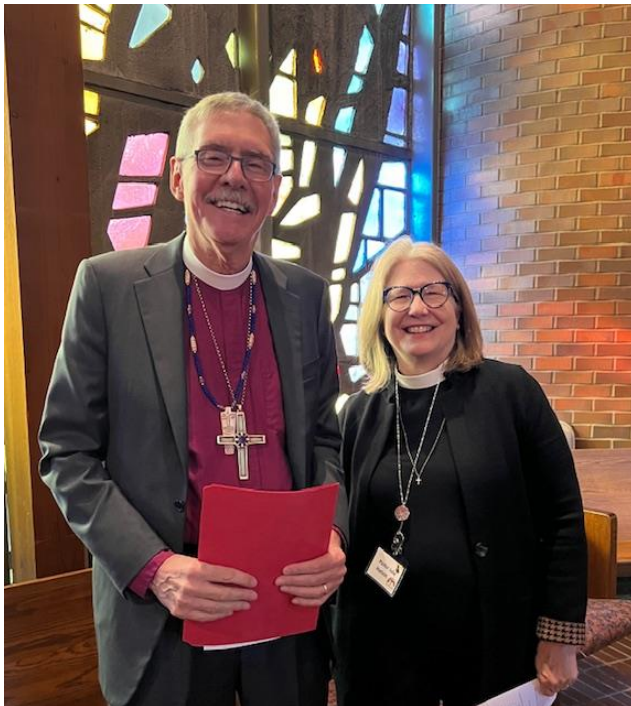


November 13 - 16

Attending the First Call Theological Education event for pastors and deacons who are in the first three years of their first call and serving within the SW Washington, NW Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Northwest Intermountain Synods. Eight pastors and deacons from our Synod attended: (l. to r.) Andrew Larsen, Bergen Eickhoff, Charissa Carroll; Karen Norton, Melissa Anderson Trust, Bonnie Sanchez, Jenny Kim and Chavaleh Forgey. The event took place at Camp Lutherhaven in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.



...continued next page



November 19

Speaking at the Interfaith Works – Olympia annual event of “Re-setting the Table.” The featured presenters at the event were members of the Nisqually Tribe. The event was held at Gloria Dei Lutheran in Olympia, where Pastor Julie Hutson and Deacon Beth Tobin serve.

Congregations in Transition – December 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
Dungeness Valley, Sequim	P	NV	Rev. Pamela Griffith Pond
Elim, Port Orchard	P	C	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
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*

Synod Calendar

Dec. 5	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 7	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 13	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders
Dec. 14	Bishop's Advent Eucharist for Rostered Leaders,
Jan. 14 – 16	Prayer Retreat for Rostered Leaders, 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.

Visit <https://cvent.me/axM3wD> to register.

2024 Prayer Retreat for Rostered Leaders

**Sunday, January 14th through
Tuesday, January 16th, 2023
at Seabeck Conference Center**

Beloved: A Day of Rest and Reconnection for Active Ministers

**OPEN TO ALL
ACTIVE
MINISTERS!!**

Working with the Prayer of the Beloved taught by Henri Nowen, held in song and silence, we'll pause to reconnect with experiences of God that drew us into Faith and ministry, moments that give us hope, barriers that give us grief, and the love of Christ that leads us on. A time to grow closer to God, your own heart, and colleagues who care. Time to be yourself. Be loved.

Retreat leader Brenda Satrum has served congregations in Washington and Montana. She's spouse to Doug Peterson (lead pastor at Faith, Shelton), mom to their two grown kids, a spiritual director with Soul Tender Spiritual Direction and Formation, and pastor of Spiritual Formation at Faith.

Visit <https://cvent.me/axM3wD> to register.

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://swwsynod.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.

Southwestern Washington Synod 2023 Congregational Christmas Worship Services

We compiled a list of Christmas worship services of congregations in our Synod. You may download a digital version [HERE](#) or contact us at 253-535-8300/ email swwsynod@plu.edu to request a paper copy.

Synod News and Announcements

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Launching Design For Peace

An ecumenical resource space for congregations to discern, design, and experiment in contextual ministry

The Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA is pleased to announce the launch of a new resource space for congregations in our region: Design for Peace. Enabled by a new grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and building on pilots in the last 2 years, Design For Peace is dedicated to **cultivating God's Shalom** by supporting congregations in **discernment, design and experimentation** around contextual ministry.

We believe that thriving contextual ministry is always **collaborative**. Design For Peace is an intentionally ecumenical space that brings together teams in multiple denominations and traditions to live into the vision of God's Shalom.

We also know that our complex and changing local context increasingly calls for congregations to be **adaptable, creative and clear** about their **mission**. This project aims to meet congregations in their context, accompanying them with tools, resources and investment.

In the coming years, Design For Peace will invest in the capacity of lay and ordained congregational leaders, gather cohorts that practice discernment and design, and make seed grants available to congregations launching experiments in contextual ministry.

To support this work, the Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA has received a 5-year grant in the amount of \$1 million through Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative.

In the Spring of 2024, a new website will be launched with further detailed information.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

The Southwestern Washington Synod is one of 105 organizations that has received grants through a competitive round of the Thriving Congregations Initiative. Reflecting a wide variety of Christian traditions, the organizations represent mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, peace church and Pentecostal faith communities.

"Congregations play an essential role in deepening the faith of individuals and contributing to the vitality of communities," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. *"We hope that these programs will nurture the vibrancy and spark the creativity of congregations, helping them imagine new ways to share God's love in their communities and across the globe."*

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A principal aim of the Endowment's religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe.

ELCA Church Council appoints Michael Burk as presiding bishop pro tempore

November 15, 2023

The Church Council of the ELCA appointed Michael Burk as presiding bishop pro tempore after its Executive Committee approved Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's [request](#) for a four- to six-month leave of absence, to begin Nov. 17. Burk, former bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, will care for the responsibilities of the presiding bishop during her leave of absence. The council, which serves as the ELCA churchwide organization's board of directors and interim legislative authority between meetings of a churchwide assembly, gathered at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Nov. 9-12.

The council took the following actions:

- Reelected Lori Fedyk to a second six-year term as ELCA treasurer, beginning Feb. 1, 2024.
- Elected Benjamin B. Bergren to the Church Council for a term ending Aug. 2025; he fills a vacancy left by Karn Carroll, who has resigned.
- Approved a current-fund spending authorization of \$68,083,962 for the 2024 fiscal year.
- Approved the 2024 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$26 million, provided that the fund balance exceeds \$10 million as of Jan. 31, 2024.
- Approved the emphasis of fundraising priorities to these areas: Where Needed Most, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and [Future Church: God's Love Made Real](#).
- Approved a continuing resolution amendment that allows for a pre-assembly identification process in the election of the presiding bishop.
- Authorized formation of a task force to assist the council and administrative team in exploring needed changes to budget work and churchwide priorities. The task force will report to the council at the spring 2024 Church Council meeting.
- Approved a motion that the Church Council will intentionally participate in racial justice education at every meeting.
- Deferred reconsidering selected passages in the social message "End-of-Life Decisions" until after the 2023-2024 development cycle for social messages.
- Acknowledged the [Order of Lutheran Franciscans](#) as an independent Lutheran organization relating to the Christian Community and Leadership home area.
- Approved an amendment to personnel policies to establish Indigenous People's Day as a churchwide organization holiday.

Situation Report #2: Crisis in the Holy Land

November 17, 2023

Situation:

The humanitarian crisis continues to worsen – almost 70% of Gazan residents are displaced, and resources such as food, water and medical supplies are in short supply. The death toll has far surpassed those of previous conflicts in the region in recent decades.



Response:

Lutheran Disaster Response is supporting:

- **Augusta Victoria Hospital.** The hospital is procuring medical supplies and providing accommodation for patients and staff unable to return to their homes in Gaza.
- **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.** The church is providing emergency education support for families who have lost income due to the war and are unable to pay school fees.
- **ACT Alliance.** Through implementing partners Lutheran World Federation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, ACT Alliance is responding to immediate needs for psychosocial support, shelter, household items, public health centers and direct cash assistance, focusing on the Palestinian communities in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
- **Salam Arabic Church and Mother of the Savior Church.** The churches are providing psychosocial support groups for Palestinians in communities in Brooklyn, NY and Dearborn, MI. The groups focus on practicing empathy, spiritual practices and contemplation activities. They specifically tackle concerns related to the current situation in Palestine and potential anxiety caused by it.

Be part of the response:

Pray

Please pray for those impacted by the humanitarian crisis in the Holy Land. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

Give

Thanks to generous donations, Lutheran Disaster Response is able to respond quickly and effectively to disasters around the globe. Your [gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response](#) will be used to assist people impacted by conflict in the Middle East.

To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

Visit the "Crisis in the Holy Land" [resource page](#).

Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response [alerts](#).

Check the Lutheran Disaster Response [blog](#).

Like Lutheran Disaster Response on [Facebook](#) and follow @ELCA_LDR on [Instagram](#).

The Southwestern Washington Synod would like to acknowledge Light of Grace Korean and Dasom Bi Cultural School for their gift of \$1,000 towards the Crisis in the Holy Land. Thank you! We appreciate your generosity!

News from our Friends and Partners



“It’s not easy to be the church these days”. This is a common sentiment in mainline Christian denominations. We know there is a need for hope and grace and the power of the gospel, but the ways of communicating that and the ways of being church in the world are shifting beneath our feet. In response to this truth and the desire to raise up courageous, resilient, and faithful leaders, the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, has created a leadership ministry called Excellence in Leadership. The coursework is a 13-month investment, meeting 2 times each month which will provide tools and resources to last a lifetime, and deep relationships with leaders from around the country to accompany you on your journey in your local community.

At the heart of this ministry is the belief that effective leadership begins with the individual and is honed in community. This ministry helps each person learn how to appreciate who they are, how they are embodied, and manage the way they personally respond to challenges and conflict. Through engaging in this work, individuals are then able to show up more effectively in places of anxiety, conflict, and frustration. When leaders show up in healthy ways, they are better equipped to help the people and systems they work in and with to also respond in healthier ways.

By engaging deeply in the studies of adaptive leadership, vulnerability, emotional intelligence, family systems, Theory U, and spiritual practices, we will be stepping forward to meet the future boldly. We are inviting participants from all regions and walks of life – lay or rostered, young or old. That includes you! The next cohort will begin on January 5, 2024, and will meet twice per month on Friday mornings from 9:00am-12:00pm Mountain Time, with a commissioning on January 17, 2025.

Truly this initiative is helpful for not only for congregations, but for all people who wish to improve their leadership skills and increase their capacity for emotional intelligence in any area of their lives. Whether you would like to do it as an individual or would like to participate as a group, this initiative is for you. Listen to this testimony from Flip Wilson, a commissioned participant from the program. (note: the video mentions an 18-month cohort, which we also offer, beginning each fall)

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/748832132>

We don't know exactly what the future holds, but we do know that it begins with each personal journey toward emotional and spiritual wholeness. Let’s embark on this journey together.

Find out more information and register here: <https://www.rmselca.org/excellence-in-leadership> Sign up today!

LSM – Lutheran Summer Music

Since the nineteenth century, households and congregations have marked the days before Christmastide with many kinds of Advent calendars. The season of waiting and longing for the “already-but-not-yet” incarnation of Jesus unfolds amidst waning daylight in the Northern Hemisphere, a time of yearning for hope, joy, and peace.

Join Lutheran Summer Music, December 3-24, for our third-annual Musical Advent Calendar—a daily moment of music and reflection on our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) pages as well as archived on our website: LSMacademy.org/acal



Intervention – It’s Nothing Like a TV Show

Pastoral Care for Individuals and Families
Hurt by Substance Use Disorders

Save the Dates **January 4, 11, 18, & 25 from 10 - 11:30 am Central Time**

The Problem/Opportunity

Every experienced pastor has faced the frustrations of dealing with substance use problems and other addictions. Referring people is helpful, but sound pastoral care can increase your impact on individuals and their families.

The Program

This 6-hour Zoom program will offer you models for pastoral care and congregational ministry to make this impact. Together, these models show how sound theology and good science work together. They enable congregation and clergy to carry out the Gospel mission of service with people and families in trouble with alcohol drugs and other addictions.

The Presenter

The presenter is Rev. Otto B. Schultz, B. A., M. Div., and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (Ret.). Enjoying long-term personal recovery, this Pastor has been a substance abuse professional for over 40 years. He has trained thousands of people in this area.

The Cost:

\$25 for the whole 6-hour program.

More Info?

Contact Otto at OttoBSchultz@outlook.com or 402-770-1974.

To register:

<https://nebraskasynod.org/event/flashing-your-bright-lights/2024-01-04/>