



# Moments for Mission

**Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

*Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.*

**February 2024**

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

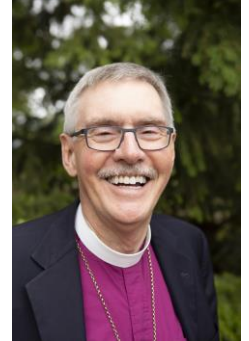
**E-mail**  
swwasynod@plu.edu

**Synod Website**  
[www.swwasynod.org](http://www.swwasynod.org)

**ELCA Website**  
[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

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

## From the Bishop



Dear Friends,

As happens about three times every century, Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day this year. It makes me think about how they are connected. Or, as Tina Turner's song puts it, "What's love got to do with it?"

A while back I did a little research on how Valentine's Day originated. Back around the year 270CE in the city of Rome, there did indeed live a man named Valentine, who was later recognized as a Christian saint. Archeologists have found a stone in the ruins of a Christian church in Rome dating to 370CE that has on it an inscription to a Saint Valentine.

There are no clear historical documents about who Valentine was or what he did, but a number of Christian legends have grown up about him. One legend says that he was a Christian priest in Rome at a time when Emperor Claudius was persecuting Christians. One of the things that Claudius did was to pass a decree forbidding the marriage of Christian couples. Valentine ignored the decree and, when Christian couples would come to him in secret, he would marry them. As a result, Valentine was arrested by Claudius and later executed, but became known as a patron saint of lovers. (He is also the patron saint of beekeepers and those with epilepsy.)

A second legend, which is a variation of the first, is that when Claudius arrested Valentine and put him in prison, the jailer in charge of the prison brought his young, blind daughter to Valentine, hoping that Valentine could heal her. The jailer had heard that Valentine was skilled at medicine and healing.

Valentine had compassion for her and prescribed various herbal medicines and ointments. He also began teaching her each day about Roman history, mathematics, science, and about God, our loving creator revealed in Jesus Christ. The night before Valentine was executed by Claudius, he wrote one last note to his young friend, urging her to always stay close to God and love God above all else. He signed the letter, "From your Valentine." Many years later, in the year 496CE, Pope Gelasius I decreed February 14 to be Saint Valentine's day.

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**From the Bishop**, *continued from Page 1*

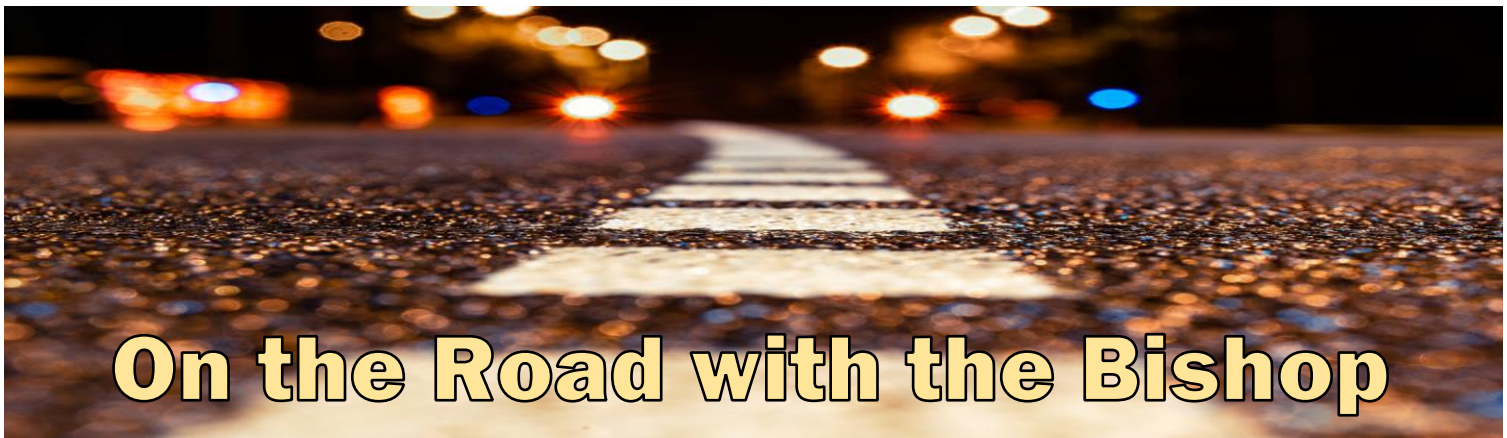
What's love got to do with Ash Wednesday? Ash Wednesday carries multiple meanings of cleansing, decision-making, and a call to hope in a gracious, life-giving God. "Dust you are and to dust you will return." You don't usually see that on a Valentine's Day card. However, that urgency poses the question, as Mary Oliver puts it, "What do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Embraced by and infused with God's constant and gracious love, Ash Wednesday impels us to entrust ourselves to God and to live the life God that gives us with hope. In love, God gathers us as the Beloved Community. In love, God brings cleansing and healing for our wounds. With hope, we participate with God and our neighbors in creating God's loving shalom in our midst. Love has everything to do with it.

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech

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# On the Road with the Bishop



## January 16-17

Attending the 2024 Bishop's Convocation with the pastors, deacons, and chaplains of our Synod at the Seabeck Conference Center, west of Bremerton. At the Convocation, the participants joined in a prayer of blessing for Vicar Rachel March, who was about to begin her ministry at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran, Winlock, as a Synod-authorized Minister.

## January 21

Celebrating the Installation of Vicar Rachel March at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran in Winlock as their Synod-authorized Minister. Pictured with Vicar March are members of St. Paul's Church Council.



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### **A Mighty Fortress**

Members at Agnus Dei Lutheran in Gig Harbor are doing their Annual Toilet Paper Drive to help stock the FISH ministry in their area. As members bring their donations, they build The Mighty Fortress in their narthex. Martin Luther would definitely approve!

## **Synod Calendar**

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>Feb. 8 – 10</b>   | Practicing Shalom  |
| <b>Feb. 16</b>       | Meditation & Spiritual Renewal with Pastor Susan Dollinger |
| <b>March 9</b>       | Synod Hunger Education @ Gloria Dei, Olympia               |
| <b>March 24 – 31</b> | Holy Week @ Holden Village                                 |
| <b>April 20</b>      | Regional Ed Gathering @ Mountain View, Edgewood            |
| <b>April 27</b>      | Regional Ed Gathering @ First Lutheran, Poulsbo            |
| <b>May 4</b>         | Regional Ed Gathering @ Zion, Camas                        |
| <b>May 17 – 19</b>   | Holden Village May Youth Weekend                           |

## Congregations in Transition – February 2024

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*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.*

### **Messiah Lutheran, Vancouver**

- Interviewing; Dave Brauer-Rieke and Tom Tweed, Interims

### **Mount Cross, University Place**

- Call Committee active; Jeff Gaustad, Interim

### **St Mark's by The Narrows, Tacoma**

- Interviewing; Audrey Lukasak and Mark Gravrock, Interims

### **Spanaway Lutheran, Spanaway**

- Transition Team active; Ron Kempe and Traci Vatne, Interims

### **Agnus Dei, Gig Harbor**

- Interviewing; Kim Latterell and Tom Aitken, Interim Team

### **Dungeness Valley, Sequim**

- Transition Team active; Pamela Griffith-Pond, Interim

### **Amazing Grace, Aberdeen**

- Transition Team active; Doug Knutson-Keller, Interim

### **St. John's, Chehalis**

- New Vacancy

### **Holy Trinity, Port Angeles**

- New Vacancy

Vicar Rachel March was installed as a Synod-authorized Minister (SAM) at St. Paul Evangelical Church, Winlock on January 21<sup>st</sup>.

Pastor Christopher Smith was installed as pastor of Celebration Lutheran Church, Puyallup, on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

## Congregation Job Openings

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

**Faith+ Ministry and Outreach Coordinator** – Faith Lutheran Church, Shelton

*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](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu). Your posts will remain active for three weeks, unless otherwise agreed upon.*

# Annual Reports

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## Congregations

### **Annual Congregational Report**

The Annual Congregational Report Online Filing is now open!

You can access it at [elca.org/congregationsreport](http://elca.org/congregationsreport). Your admin office should have received LookUp ID and Passcode. If you still need your passcode to log on or have any questions, please call the Synod Office at 253-535-8300 and we will assist you.

### **Annual Mission Support Intent Form**

We are still accepting your congregation's Mission Support Intent Form for 2024. You can access the form [HERE](#). Please email completed forms to [swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu). Thank you.

## Rostered Leaders

### **Annual Minister Report**

Don't forget to file your Annual Minister Report!

Use the links below to select the form that pertains to you. Please email completed reports to [swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu). Thank you.

[Minister of Word and Sacrament – under call from synod](#)

[Minister of Word and Sacrament – under call from congregation](#)

[Minister of Word and Sacrament – not under call](#)

[Minister of Word and Sacrament – retired](#)

[Minister of Word and Service – under call from synod](#)

[Minister of Word and Service – under call from congregation](#)

[Minister of Word and Service – not under call](#)

[Minister of Word and Service – retired](#)

### **Pulpit Supply List**

If you would like to be on our Pulpit Supply List for the Synod, please email the Synod Office at [swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu). Make sure you let us know what your travel restrictions/radius are. Thank you.