



# 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.

**April 2024**

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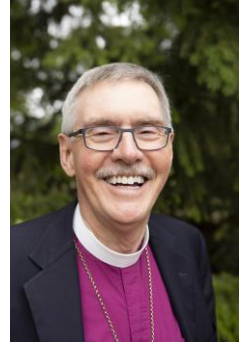
**ELCA Website**

[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

**Facebook page**

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

## From the Bishop



When I recently met with all 65 bishops of the ELCA, we sent a letter to President Joe Biden urging him to do everything in his power to bring an end to the current suffering and loss of life in Gaza and Israel and to lay a foundation for a lasting and just peace. There has been too much death and suffering in all of the communities of Palestine, Israel, and the Holy Land. We must be part of the international effort to help bring peace.

I am enclosing below the full text of that letter from the Conference of Bishops. If you find yourself in agreement with the letter, I encourage you to send or email a copy to your US Senators and Representatives.

In this Easter season as we celebrate Christ's victory over death, we also work and pray that Christ's new life and peace will come to our world, particularly in those places of deepest pain.

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"* (Matthew 5:9).

March 3, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, as the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), write with utmost urgency after more than 140 days of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. We urge you to do everything in your power to bring an end to the current suffering and lay the foundation for lasting peace with justice.

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As members of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, we are elected to lead one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3 million members in more than 8,700 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. We are compelled to advocate, pray and act by the social teachings of our denomination and by our belief—rooted in Scripture—that all people are made in the image of God.

We mourn the loss of 1,200 precious lives in Israel on Oct. 7 by the actions of Hamas and the trauma for those 250 others who were taken hostage. We mourn the loss of over 30,000 precious lives in Gaza—including tens of thousands of women and children—who have died in Israel’s military action since then and the trauma that ripples outward from this loss. We grieve the deaths of more than 400 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel since Oct. 7 as the circle of violence expands and makes casualties of yet more civilians.

Too many have suffered. Too many lives have been lost. Strong U.S. leadership is needed to help bring a comprehensive permanent cease-fire, an end to the occupation and lasting peace.

We commend your administration’s stated commitment to ensuring Palestinians in Gaza can remain and that those who have fled should be able to return to their homes once it is safe to do so. We affirm the United States’ opposition to calls by Israeli officials to resettle Gaza. We support your administration’s efforts in working toward an immediate release of hostages held in Gaza in exchange for political prisoners. We call on all parties to abide by the Geneva Conventions and customary international law. We call for the collective punishment imposed on civilians in Gaza to be brought to an immediate end. The United States must do more to help secure the immediate release of all civilians being held hostage and ensure international protection for all civilians.

We welcome the recent order of the International Court of Justice that calls upon Israel “to take all measures within its power” to prevent genocide, in addition to requiring Israel to report the steps it is taking to uphold its obligation to ensure humanitarian aid is reaching the people of Gaza. We call upon your administration to encourage accountability from Israel by taking the appropriate actions to follow through with this order and these responsibilities.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is worsening. According to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, more than 24,000 children in Gaza have lost one or both parents. Save the Children reports that 75% of schools, colleges and universities in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged. UNICEF implores the world to respond as 90% of children under 2 years old in Gaza are subject to “severe food poverty.” We are also concerned that many donor states, including the United States, have suspended funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the primary international organization providing lifesaving aid for millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the region. We call upon your administration to immediately resume funding to UNRWA and encourage other donor states to follow suit. The U.S. government must do more to ensure the immediate and consistent provision of humanitarian assistance.

As leaders in the ELCA, which is committed to peace, we call on your administration and Congress to support the demilitarization of the conflict. In the words of this church’s social teaching: “We denounce beliefs and actions that find ultimate security in weapons and warfare” (*For Peace in God’s World*, p. 5).

The time for a comprehensive cease-fire is now. Israelis and Palestinians must no longer continue to experience these ongoing cycles of war and violence. The United States must help move all parties toward clear commitments to lasting security and peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. This means a homeland for Israelis and a globally recognized State of Israel, including its right to exist. Equally, it means self-determination for the Palestinian people and a state that Palestinians may call home with full diplomatic recognition, in line with decades of U.S. diplomatic policy.

Mr. President, we ask you to support a permanent bilateral cease-fire that will bring a lasting end to the violence. Only then can the root causes of violence and suffering be addressed. We also call upon all parties to work toward a lasting, just peace that protects all human life and ensures the long-term security and sustainability of all those living in the Middle East.

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We are also concerned about the consequences that the Gaza conflict has had in the United States, perhaps most vividly in the sharp rise in expressions of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate. Aware of your efforts to address these trends, we pledge to do all we can to speak out and to work together with your administration and Congress, and with our ecumenical and interreligious partners, to try to prevent all forms of hate that demean the dignity of every person.

Jesus taught: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Mr. President, child of God and made in God's image, we are praying with and for you as your siblings in Christ. May God give you everything necessary to meet the needs of this critical moment, particularly peacemaking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod  
Chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops



# On the Road with the Bishop



**February 26 – March 1**

Attending the ELCA  
Conference of Bishops  
at our national office in  
Chicago.

**March 17**  
Preaching at St. John's  
Lutheran Church, Chehalis.



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**March 21**  
Blessing the new Prayer Chapel  
and Worship Place at eliseo  
(Formerly the Tacoma Lutheran  
Retirement Community). Pastor  
Anna Bonaro and Pastor Chris Ode  
are chaplains at eliseo. Kevin  
McFeely is the CEO.



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**March 25**

Attending the Chrism Mass for pastors and deacons of the Southwestern Washington Synod, the Northwest Washington Synod, and the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, held at St. Andrew's Lutheran in Bellevue.

At a Chrism Mass, all pastors and deacons renew their ministry vows for the coming year and receive a small jar of blessed olive oil that they can use for baptisms and anointings.

I was with Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee and Interim Bishop Melissa Skelton.



# Synod Calendar

<b>April 6</b>	Synod Hunger Education - ZOOM
<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 – April 2024

*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 Vote Meeting April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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

- Interviewing; Audrey Lukasak and Mark Gravrock, Interims

### **Spanaway Lutheran, Spanaway**

- Call Committee 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; Brenda Satrum, Interim

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

- New Vacancy; Beth Orling and Gail Wheatley (TEC), Interims

### **St Paul, Castle Rock**

- New Vacancy; Pulpit Supply Matt March

# 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/>

No current employment opportunities.

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

### Rostered Leaders

#### Annual Minister Report

**We are still accepting your reports!** These reports help Bishop and Synod Staff to have your current information on file, as well as allowing a better opportunity to support you. If you haven't filed your report yet, we encourage you to do so.

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.



## Upcoming Events



ENVISIONING OUR  
SYNOD PATH -  
WALKING AND  
WORKING TOGETHER

## 2024 SYNOD EDUCATIONAL GATHERINGS

Registration Fee is \$30 and includes the workshops and lunch.

### LOCATIONS

**April 20** - Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood

**April 27** - First Lutheran Church, Poulsbo

**May 4** - Zion Lutheran Church, Camas

### WORKSHOPS

#### ALL THREE DATES

Living Stones: We're Still Alive!!! - Rev. Eric Utto-Galarneau

Conversations in Black and White - Synod Anti-Racism Team

Transforming Conflict: How to listen and communicate - Bishop Rick Jaech

Getting the Most Out of the ELCA Youth Gathering - Rev. Bergen Eickhoff

Companioning the Bereaved: An Introduction to Grief Care - Rev. Keith Marshall

#### ! April 20 ONLY !

Lutheran World Hunger - Synod Hunger Team

The Works of the Lutheran Disaster Response - Ray Shjerven

#### ! April 27 ONLY !

Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery - Sarah Augustine

Young Adults Community - Deacon Andrew Larsen

So We and Our Children May Live - Sarah Augustine

Shalom Project - St.Mark's and Peace Lutheran Church Tacoma

#### ! May 4 ONLY !

MMIW/P - Rev. Linda Smith

Please visit [swwasynod.org](http://swwasynod.org) for more information and to register for this event!

Questions? Contact us at (253) 535-8300 or [swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu)