



The Spirit

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News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Words of Grace And Blessing For All

by The Rev. Nancy Winder, Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:4-7

In this month of Thanksgiving, these words from Philippians are words of grace and blessing for all of us. And they are very good words for those of us in our synod who work with candidates for the public ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Our synod has one of the highest numbers of candidates and applicants. The people and congregations here in Northwest Washington are being attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst in lifting up women and men for ministry in the whole church.

Candidacy in the ELCA is a special process of formation. When someone begins discerning the call of God for public ministry, they enter this pathway of learning and spiritual growth. The process begins with an application. There is then an initial interview with a member of the synod candidacy committee. Along with the application, their home congregation affirms the applicant by registering them for candidacy. There is a significant psychological evaluation. When all the initial steps are complete, the applicant meets with the candidacy committee for an entrance interview. Here the committee has a conversation with the applicant based on an autobiographical essay. The goal here is readiness for learning and formation. Once the candidate is entranced,

she or he can begin their education and preparation for public ministry. A member of the candidacy committee is appointed to walk with each candidate throughout the process.

At the next step - endorsement, usually in the second year - the candidate officially declares which roster, which form of leadership, they want to be on: ordained ministry, Associate in Ministry, Diaconal ministry, or Deaconess. (Our synod is also unique in having candidates for each of the four rosters.) The final step is approval, at the end of the educational process. Once approved, a candidate is available for call to the roster for which they have prepared.

It is a real gift and joy to work with these candidates. They are women and men who, having heard God's call to proclamation and service, commit their lives to learning, growth in faith, and the love and care for God's people in the congregations of the ELCA. The Candidacy Committee is a hard-working, committed group from around our synod who meet for a full day every month in this ministry. Besides the monthly meeting, the committee prepares in various ways for interviews with candidates and each stays in contact with and works on the needs of the individuals assigned to them.

As a congregation leader you can help by being informed about the process. Read more about it at the link below. Invite me, Pastor Nancy Winder, Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy, to speak at an Adult Forum in your congregation, or to preach at Sunday worship.

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Here 'n There

If you have a candidate in your congregation, make sure the whole community knows about what they're doing and their progress in their preparation, and support them financially by paying all or part of their tuition.

If you don't have a candidate, pay attention to those people in your congregation who just might have a call to public ministry. Sometimes it just takes a word from someone else to open a heart to this call.

So in this month of thanksgiving, offer prayers of rejoicing and thanks to God for all the people in our synod who are hearing God's call to follow Christ as public leaders in our church. Pray for them, and for our Candidacy Committee, that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless us with all the gifts of all God's people.

You can learn more about candidacy in the ELCA at www.elca.org/candidacy

Here 'n There

- The congregation of **Salem in Mount Vernon presented a check to Fir-Conway Lutheran** to support their salmon BBQ event, a fundraiser for Josephine Sunset Home. From this event, Josephine received from Fir-Conway and others a check for \$6,000.
- **First Lutheran in Mount Vernon** provides a dinner the last Tuesday of the month at *Friendship House*, a shelter for the homeless.
- Every three months the members of **Prince of Peace in SeaTac** provides a week of meals for the homeless women sheltered at Lake Burien Presbyterian Church.
- **Prince of Peace in Shoreline** is joining others for a community concert on Sunday, Nov 3. The concert is to raise money for the *North Helpline: Emergency Services and Foodbank*. The food bank sees more than 900 families each week, with 35 new families enrolling each week.
- **Peace in Silvana** filled 450 school bags to send to Lutheran World Relief.
- The women of the **Lutheran Church in the San Juans** gathered in September to work on kits for Lutheran World Relief. They were able to put-together: 51 layettes, 57 health kits, 85 school kits and 25 sewing kits.
- **Central in Seattle** is celebrating its 120th year as a congregation. A celebration service will be held at 11 a.m. on All Saint's Sunday, November 7.
- A cooperative effort between **Bethany in Seattle and SHARE** (Seattle Housing and Rescue Effort) began on July 15 giving homeless men a safe and dry place to sleep at night. The men who stay at Bethany use the Fellowship Hall and have access to the

kitchen. One of SHARE's stated goals is that they leave the facility clean or cleaner when they leave. Bethany reports that the men have done an excellent job.

- **Faith Lutheran Young Adult Ministry (YAM) in Redmond** has begun a Bible study called *Take The Plunge*. The Bible study focuses on building community, trust and an open interpretation of God's Word.
- Members of **Prince of Peace in Everett** worshipped with inmates at the Shelton Correctional Center on October 2.
- Work is being done to bring power, light and water to the parking lot at **Our Redeemer's in Seattle**. The reason? To make the parking lot a place where ministry can happen--hosting Tent City 3 or neighborhood events.

The Spirit, a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is intended for members, leaders, and clergy of synod congregations and organizations. Congregations are encouraged to copy **The Spirit** and include it in their own newsletters. **The Spirit** can be downloaded from the Synod website.

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