

CROSS

Connection



The Cross Connection is a monthly publication of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod published for its clergy, associates in ministry, lay leadership and ecumenical partners.

From the Bishop

April 2014

God's Beloved People,

It has been a month of meetings and more are promised as we move into the heart of the spring calendar. For comfort the spring flowers are blooming some places in the synod (south) and are promised elsewhere (north). And of course April will bear to us the festival of Easter and the joy of Jesus' call to Life in the midst of the mundane!

The Spring Conference of Bishops meeting, including a one-day retreat with our new Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, is just over. Bishop Eaton called for this time to listen to colleagues and to begin new days of cooperation between the Churchwide staff and the Conference. These relationships take constant tending and it was a perfect moment as two members of the Conference—Eaton and former bishop Chris Boerger—assume new roles as leaders of the Churchwide staff.

The Conference of Bishops meeting was filled with reports and the work of fine-tuning the seminarian assignment process and some call process documents. Most of us were frustrated that we had only 60% of new graduates requested for placement and we're trying to make the assignments more flexible in response. It took three days of committee work to fine-tune the process by which a bishop sends confidential information about candidates for call to new synods. In all, these meetings were very important for laying groundwork for trust and the work ahead.

Synod Assembly Planning has been proceeding apace and I hope you have selected your Voting Members to participate May 16-18 in Spokane. Resolutions are being written, worship is being planned, program modules are being confirmed and a good event is almost ready to go! Be sure to check with your cluster Dean for the date of your local pre-assembly meeting. This is the time when your questions can be answered and you'll have

access to the business details—budget, resolutions, program choices—for your planning.

Elsewhere in this edition you'll see an article by Pr. Helga Jansons regarding the New Wine event just concluded in Idaho Falls. These were exhilarating days full of difficult choices and fresh possibilities for mission through our Synodically Authorized Emmaus Community. Pressing through layers of habit and outdated assumptions about the culture we live in, Emmaus is pushing into the future and I believe they are going to choose life! I hope others of you are interested in listening in to their process because the questions in Idaho Falls are the same questions faced in every congregation's territory. Pr. Jansons has offered her contact information so that you can stay in touch with this unfolding process.

I look forward to meeting with the Deans as we begin the important work of hiring the four Net-Workers we intend to employ and train before fall. Materials have now been sent to the congregations of the Upper Snake and Treasure Valley clusters seeking nominations and letters of interest for the position that will serve in Southern Idaho. Please keep this process in your prayers as we inaugurate a new way of supporting ministry in our synod!

Exciting, growing ministry, warming days and the promise of resurrection: This is the pregnancy of Lent!

God's richest blessings,

Bishop Martin Wells

Pr Martin Wells, Bishop



THE CHRYSALIS CHURCH

by Pastor Helga Jansons (Director for Evangelical Mission)

The image of a chrysalis is often used at Easter because it is one of nature's miracles; that a caterpillar can turn into a butterfly. It helps to explain the resurrection of Jesus, and how his resurrected body was so different. Even more, at his ascension he virtually flew into the sky, like a beautiful butterfly, never to die again. Jesus is always present in an even more radical form as he comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

This metaphor gives us hope that new life can come out of death or the pain that is in our lives. Usually it is used for children's sermons where just a mention is made of the baffling chrysalis stage when what is in the pupa is more like a soup. But something radical is changing in there. Some cells are told to die, others digest themselves, while still others turn into eyes, antennae and wings. Hormones and day length regulate this process and the old ingredients are not wasted; they are used for metamorphosis.

Recently this metaphor was used in relation to churches. Bishop Wells and I were part of a three day consultation with Emmaus Lutheran Community in Idaho Falls. Mission Investment Fund and the ELCA fund 21st Century Strategies to work with New Wine Ministries which are those people that chose to stay with the ELCA after their congregations voted to leave the ELCA. Our synod has only one like that where enough people chose to stay with the ELCA and are committed to giving birth to a new congregation.

Bill surveyed the people of Emmaus and the community for several months and compared the results with 1,000 churches and demographics around the nation. He interviewed members of Emmaus and offered training sessions and gave recommendations. Only 20% of all churches that attempt a transformation initiative toward sustainable growth succeed. In the ELCA it is 10%, and if they their first initiative fails, they have even less chance to re-engage a second attempt. Congregations don't know how to go about it and are unwilling to do whatever it takes. It seems they are unwilling to "stay in the soup".

"In that chrysalis there is no caterpillar that is growing wings. It is goo. For this metamorphosis you need to let go of everything you are in order to be all that you can become. Churches that are faithful, effective and sustainable do things differently than other churches. It is not a theological, denominational or geographic issue. It is a focus issue and a behavioral issue" said Bill.

Some of the essential ingredients of this chrysalis church sound like things we know. We can know the hormones involved in the transformation of the caterpillar. Many churches have done some work in discerning their mission and guiding principles. However most are still doing many things in the same way which may attract former Lutherans or other people much the same as themselves. A radical transformation is a lot more gooey.

For example he repeatedly said "Sunday School is dead" – as we know it. Not just in the struggling ELCA churches. People do not want to spend 2 hours on a Sunday. However his recommendation for what is working is very different and exciting. The old ingredients are used, but are multiplied in ways that can grow the ministry of the whole congregation almost effortlessly. I can imagine my 12 year old son responding to all of it.

Being part of this consultation taught me so much I can't wait to share it with others. I have permission to use anything that will help the kingdom of God. Please call me in to work with your church or leaders. It can be on a Sunday or during the week helga.jansons@elca.org phone (509) 380 7122



Don't Forget!

The date for the 2015 Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Bishop's Convocation in Walla Walla, WA has been changed. It will be held ***October 13-16, 2014***
Speaker will be Rev. Dr. Timothy Wengert

Lutheran Disaster Response provides relief for the displaced in South Sudan

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will provide \$700,000 in humanitarian assistance to help support those affected by the violence in South Sudan. The funds will be disbursed through Lutheran Disaster Response-International to The Lutheran World Federation. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that more than 860,000 people have been displaced as a result of the fighting that began in December between government forces and rebels.

"It is a great sadness to see the fragile young democracy of South Sudan broken and lives of hundreds of thousands disrupted, fleeing their homes to find security," said Carl Stecker, ELCA director for diakonia (service). "We are thankful that The Lutheran World Federation is able to quickly respond to the needs of South Sudanese, not only in South Sudan, but also as they flee across the borders into the neighboring countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Chad." Operating through local partners, the ELCA will respond in the following areas:

In Ethiopia, \$200,000 for potable drinking water and to improve sanitation and hygiene services.

In Kenya, \$150,000 for immediate needs, including protection, for newly arrived refugees.

In South Sudan, \$130,000 for non-food item assistance for the internally displaced.

In Uganda, \$120,000 to help manage the distribution of non-food items and increase work in water, sanitation and hygiene programs.

In Chad, \$100,000 for newly arriving refugees in transit centers. More than 200,000 people have sought refuge in Chad, fleeing the violence in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.



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SynodELCA](https://www.facebook.com/EasternWashingtonIdahoSynodELCA)

"We are very happy to be here in safety in Uganda, and it is good that we can now get enough water. Before we were struggling," said Sara Tarakila, as reported February 4 by Lutheran World Information, the news service of The Lutheran World Federation. "There was not enough water, but now things are improving here," Tarakila added, smiling.

In January, Lutheran Disaster Response-International provided \$10,000 in humanitarian assistance to the Episcopal Church of Sudan to help provide protection and life-saving essentials for the internally displaced.

Thank you for you Mission Dollars and Benevolence which is providing drinking water for these people displaced by war.

Call Process Status

A Process beginning/congregational study	I Interim	AP Associate/Assistant Pastor
B Names received or on-site visits in process	P Pastor	VP Visitation Pastor
C Call in process/issued	CP Co-Pastor	AIM Associate in Ministry
NV New Vacancy	LP Lead Pastor	L Lay Position
TC Term call	SP Supply Pastor	TM Transition Minister (available for the open-ended call)
VP Visitation Pastor		

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE
P	Boise, ID – King of Glory	NV	Kari Sansgaard LP
P	Bonnors Ferry, ID – Trinity	B	Kimberly Meinecke I
P	Chelan, WA – Fullness of God	A	Elizabeth Damico
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul	NV	Betty Krafft SP
P	Coeur d’Alene, ID – Trinity	A	Tom Inch I
P	Gifford, ID – Good Hope	A	Valerie Beesley TEEM
P	Grandview, WA – Immanuel Lutheran	A	Gary Rhode L
P	Kamiah, ID -- Faith Lutheran	A	Art Finney I
P	Moses Lake, WA – Immanuel Lutheran	B	Phylis Stromme I
P	Pocatello, ID – Church of the Good Shepherd	A	Barbara Harrison-Condon I
P	Sandpoint, ID – First Lutheran	A	Bob Chenault I
P	Spokane, WA—Bethlehem Lutheran	NV	Steve Wee SP
P	Terrace Heights, WA—Tree of Life	NV	Mo Garcia L
P	Thayne, WY—Star Valley United Church	NV	Al Schoonover SP

Your Church in Action

We ask that you keep the ministry of the church, our synod, and the whole world as well as those listed below in your prayers . . .

We Pray

- Rev Laura Lynn (Blackfoot & Firth, ID) for continued recovery and healing after surgery.
- Rev. Rick Evenson (Medical Lake, WA) as he continues treatment for multiple myeloma.
- Rev. Dave Kappus (Central - Spokane, WA) as he continues treatment for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.
- Rev. Ginny Krekling (Ellensburg, WA) for continued healing after knee surgery.
- Rev. Ron Jettter (Heartlinks Hospice Sunnyside, WA) and his family, on the passing of his mother, Mary.
- Sally Dominguez (St. Mark’s - Spokane, WA) for continued healing.
- Rev. Elizabeth Damico, as she celebrates the first anniversary of her ordination on 4/6/2013.

We also pray for . . .

- Families facing change, whether from growth, or loss or uncertainty.
- Congregations facing change, staff changes, and growing with (and for) their members.
- Our deployed military, may their time away from home be fruitful and safe.
- Children, may their lives be full of the wonder that we remember, and discovery of their own special place in God’s loving arms.

Prayer Requests . . . to be included or removed from the Synod Prayer Request list, please send your request to the synod office@ewaisynod.org, or call 509-838-9871.

Presiding bishop

Elizabeth A. Eaton

From a cross, a dazzling light

The essence of Christ: Loving, selfless suffering and death for the life of the world



MICHAEL D. WATSON

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shown like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white (Matthew 17:1-2).

The Transfiguration is a strange story—the mountain, the light, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, the utterly confounded disciples, the voice of God. How do we make sense of this supernatural event? What does the Transfiguration of our Lord have to do with us? I confess that I couldn't figure it out. So, when serving in the parish, I scheduled Youth Sunday on Transfiguration Sunday, thereby successfully avoiding preaching about it for years.

I have heard many sermons and have sung hymns that describe the awe of being in the radiant presence of Christ and the wonder of seeing the law and the prophets embodied by Moses and Elijah, that capture the desire of the disciples to remain on the mountain and then bid them and us to go back down to the plain. There is wisdom in that. But I never understood why Jesus was transfigured.

The story of the Transfiguration comes right after Jesus asked his disciples, "But who do you say I am?"; Peter's confession of faith, "You are the Christ"; and Jesus making clear that the Christ would go to Jerusalem, suffer and be killed. This wasn't well received by Peter. A suffering messiah? What would that accomplish? A dead messiah? How could such helplessness restore the kingdom to Israel? If they were going to take on Rome and its client-king Herod, it would be better to have a real demonstration of power.

It's after Jesus tells his disciples about his coming passion that he takes this side trip up the mountain to confer with Moses and Elijah. Only in Luke do we hear what they were talking about: "Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Eli-

jah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30-31). This is the kernel of the gospel. All of Jesus' preaching and teaching and healing, though important and precious to our faith, are secondary to God's act of reconciliation accomplished by Christ on the cross. This is the essence of Christ: loving, selfless suffering and death for the life of the world.

Now the transfiguration makes sense. If Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome, and if that light would blaze most clearly on the cross, it makes perfect sense that the radiant essence of Christ would break out on that mountain when Jesus was talking about his crucifixion.

That explains the Transfiguration, but what does it have to do with us?

Stephen Bouman, executive director for the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and former bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, tells this story about one of the events of Sept. 11, 2001. A pastor in the synod also served as a chaplain to the fire department. The pastor saw the first plane hit and ran to the site. When he arrived the firefighters were putting on their gear. The pastor gathered them together, marked the cross on their foreheads with oil

and prayed. Then the firefighters ran into the building. The people who survived said they could see the crosses shining on the firefighters' foreheads. The firefighters were transfigured. In that great darkness and suffering the light of Christ appeared.

In baptism we have been marked with the cross of Christ. We are redeemed by the suffering and dying messiah and now participate in Christ's resurrection. And we are sent into the dark places of the world. Through our weakness the glory of Christ is revealed to a broken and hurting world. The light of the cross shines on our foreheads.

The Transfiguration is celebrated on the Sunday before Lent, March 2 this year. May the light of Christ be our guide on our Lenten journey. May it grow brighter as we approach the cross. And may we, joined with the death and resurrection of Christ through baptism, be light for the world. □

All of Jesus' preaching and teaching and healing, though important and precious to our faith, are secondary to God's act of reconciliation accomplished by Christ on the cross.

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her email address: bishop@elca.org.

This column originally appeared in the March issue of The Lutheran. Reprinted with permission.

Don't Wait! - Health Assessment - Take It Now!

If you have ELCA-Primary health benefits, we need your help. Take the 2014 Mayo Clinic Health Assessment on the EmbodyHealth web portal at www.elcaforwellness.org before April 30. We'll be one person closer to 65% participation that save thousands of dollars on your premiums, and you'll earn a \$150 credit of Wellness Dollars to offset out-of-pocket medical costs.

The assessment is confidential, simple to complete, and you do not need to know specific numbers such as blood pressure or cholesterol. You can even answer a question with "I don't know." Presently, 35 people have taken the assessment, so we need another 27 people to do their part.

Find instructions for taking the health assessment at
myPortico.PorticoBenefits.org



<http://kevinbeebe.wordpress.com/>

Kevin Beebe is a Young Adult in Global Mission for the ELCA. Living on the West Bank, his blog is an amazing view into the life of an ELCA Missionary. He grew up and attended school in the Northwest, and his observations of living in a war torn area are worth the time spent reading.

Fairfield Community Church

(Zion Lutheran-ELCA and First Presbyterian -PCUSA)

*will begin their ministry
as a federated congregation
with a worship celebration*

*10:00 am Sunday March 23
at 206 W Hamilton
Fairfield, Washington*

*You are cordially invited
to join them in worship and in prayer.*

Last month's photo was taken at a perfectly snow covered Camp Lutherhaven. The first weekend in February, third through sixth graders from all over the region enjoyed a great weekend at camp. The Saturday night hike was the high point of the weekend, with a bonfire, s'mores, hot chocolate and worship on a mountaintop. Send photos from your your congregation to be included in "Where in the Synod is that?"

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday Sept. 7, 2014



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday celebrates who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. On **Sunday, Sept. 7, 2014**, ELCA congregations will gather once again for a day dedicated to serving the communities in which we live. Every day you do the work of serving your neighbors and sharing God’s love with others. “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday provides us with the opportunity to do God’s work together.

The first “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday, held in 2013, gave members of all ages an opportunity to live out their faith in service to others. As a church that believes God is calling us into the world together, we shared Jesus’ love with our neighbors through a multitude of service projects — from preparing meals for people who are homeless to cleaning up beaches and parks, from visiting with the elderly to writing letters to military personnel. We did all of this and more.

We hope you are considering plans to organize a day of service. To help guide your congregation’s planning, download a toolkit at www.ELCA.org/dayofservice. T-shirts are once again available from Old Lutheran to help increase the visual impact across the ELCA. Sign up your congregation for the day of service by following the simple steps listed below. This will allow us to keep your congregation updated with new information for what we pray will be another remarkable day of service.
Register in four steps:

1. Click [here](#) to go to the **Registration** page
2. Insert your Congregational ID number
3. Insert your ELCA member number: **L022791**
4. Provide contact information and answer a few questions

Shortly after Sept. 7, we will invite you to share stories about your congregation’s participation. Send your stories and photos to LivingLutheran@elca.org, so that together we can celebrate what God accomplishes through you. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. With our hands, we do God’s work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ’s name throughout the world. I look forward to doing this work together on “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday and every day.
In Christ who frees us,

Elizabeth A. Eaton

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

[Register your congregation](#) for “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday.



Plan your day from start to finish using this [toolkit](#).



Yellow: wear it, share it.

Leadership in Ministry has offered family systems training to clergy and church leaders since 1992. This workshop is coming to the Collins Center near Portland in 2014 for the second year. It provides in-depth training in Edwin Friedman's application of Bowen family systems theory to congregations.

Attendees can:

- find greater sense of direction and purpose
- get clearer about what they are responsible for—and what they aren't
- learn an effective approach to conflict
- gain more energy and clarity for ministry

Dates for the workshop: April 28-30 and Nov. 3-5, 2014. Learn more and register at <http://www.leadershipinministry.org/> or contact Margaret Marcuson at Margaret@margaretmarcuson.com

Where in the Synod is that!



*Only a few weeks left to register
before the late registration fee!*

2014 Synod Assembly

May 16-18 at the Doubletree by Hilton Spokane City Center

“Living in Hope”

COSTS PER PERSON:

SINGLE OCCUPANCY \$505

Includes: Registration, Single occupancy housing nights of 5/16 and 5/17, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

RETIRED ROSTERED SINGLE OCCUPANCY \$430

Includes: Registration, Single occupancy housing nights of 5/16 and 5/17, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY \$380

Includes: Registration, Double occupancy housing nights of 5/16 and 5/17, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

RETIRED ROSTERED DOUBLE OCCUPANCY \$305

Includes: Registration, Double occupancy housing nights of 5/16 and 5/17, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

COMMUTER \$330

Includes: Registration, no housing, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

RETIRED ROSTERED COMMUTER \$255

Includes: Registration, no housing, Meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast)

EXTRA NIGHTS HOUSING

The cost is \$115 per night or \$58 if double occupancy.

A late fee of \$50 per person will be charged
for registrations made after April 7.

MOVING BACK INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD



discovering what it means to step beyond the walls of our buildings to be the church in our communities.

APRIL 4-5 WHITWORTH UNIVERSITY

6:00pm Friday - 3:00pm Saturday

Led by Alan Roxburgh
www.themissionalnetwork.com

\$135 for a Pastor & Two Leaders/\$35 each additional

Presbytery of the Inland Northwest
 Register @ www.presbyinw.org

**BE
THE
CHURCH**

Boost Your Retirement Savings with an IRA

from the Mission Investment Fund

Rostered clergy, non-rostered staff and congregation members can boost their retirement earnings with an Individual Retirement Account from the Mission Investment Fund. You have until Tax Day, April 15, 2014, to open a new IRA or add to an existing one for tax year 2013.


Your contribution to a Traditional IRA may be tax-deductible, depending on whether you are covered by a 401(k) plan at work and your income level. Again, based on your income, you may be eligible to contribute to a Roth IRA, which allows for tax-free growth of your interest earnings and no taxes at withdrawal.

The Mission Investment Fund offers Term and Demand Investments for Traditional and Roth IRAs. For more information, visit our IRA Service Center at mif.elca.org or call MIF Customer Service toll-free at 877-886-3522. For information on all other MIF investments and loans, contact Joel S. Wudel, your Regional Manager, at (773) 682-1765 or email joel.wudel@elca.org

Free and Available

2 sets of gently used paraments - 1 set white and 1 set green

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 509-758-7751 - OSLCclarkston@clearwire.net



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With vibrant, new original music, dance routines, life-transforming stories; and exciting audiovisual effects, the tour is indicative of the dynamic generation of leaders coming out of the Watoto programme.

With a message of hope and inspiration, experience the Watoto Children's Choir - ambassadors of the millions of orphan and vulnerable children in Africa

WHEN: Thursday, April 3, 11am & 7pm
WHERE: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
8441 N. Indian Trail Rd.
www.pospokane.org / 509-465-0779

WWW.WATOTO.COM

Ventures for Growing Stewards

Workshop 1

(For Pastors, and up to
6 Lay People from each congregation)

April 26th 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

*Zion Lutheran Church
Spokane Valley, Washington*

For further information and to RSVP
please contact Helga.jansons@elca.org
or phone 509-380-7122

Annual Auction

Western Themed Dinner

Beer and Wine

Live & Silent Auction

(With Dessert Auction)

April 26, 2014

Doors Open at 5:00 PM

Central Lutheran Church

512 S. Bernard Street

Spokane, Washington 99204

\$20 per person

\$140 if purchase Table of Eight

Tickets may be purchased by contacting:

Debra at 509.926.5701

Pastor Shelley at pastor@lcmewu.com

Donations may be dropped off at

639 Elm Street, Cheney, WA 99004

(or call and arrangements will be made for pickup)

As always your presence and donations are greatly appreciated. You make this evening our most successful fundraiser!

Cash, Check and Credit Cards Accepted

ELCA Global Church Sponsorship



Missionaries • Young Adults in Global Mission • International Leaders • Global Ministries

Thank you to the people of your synod who sponsored these long-term Missionaries and ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) in 2013 through ELCA Global Church Sponsorship. You have helped to make God’s global mission happen!

Barbara Robertson	Tanzania	Kevin Beebe	Jerusalem
Randy and Carol Stubbs	Tanzania	Abigail Cress	Jerusalem
Megan Ross, Deaconess	Indonesia	Anna Guthrie	Madagascar
Rev. Nathan and Sharonette Bowman	Japan	Katrina Hanson	Malaysia
Rev. Dorcas Wang	China	Erin Hedrick	United Kingdom
Rev. Ann Klavano	Papua New Guinea	Julia Hubbard	Malaysia
Andrea and Rev. Luke Roske-Metcalf	Mexico		

Learn more about how you can make a global difference at www.ELCA.org/globalchurch and www.ELCA.org/map.

Creating Meaningful Service and Mission Experiences with Youth Friday, May 30, 6:30-8:30pm, and Saturday, May 31, 9am-4pm Messiah Lutheran Church, 4202 N Belt, Spokane, WA

Service projects and mission trips have the potential to be transformative experiences for youth. However, leaders often get **caught up in logistics and forget (or aren’t sure how) to make these experiences meaningful for young people.** This leadership training event introduces participants to a service learning model that can add richness and meaning to youth service experiences (such as a summer mission trip or fall service project) and includes a local service project to provide a hands-on example.



The training will be led by Professor Mark Jackson of Trinity Lutheran College, lead trainer with the Service And Learning Leadership Team (SALLT) Project. Mark formerly served on staff at Central Lutheran Church in Spokane and was an active leader with the **synod’s** Lutheran Youth Organization.

Congregations are invited to send teams of youth ministry leaders (including high school youth!) to share in the learning process together. For more information or to register your group, contact Messiah Lutheran Church at 509-327-4446 or office@messiah.comcastbiz.net. Registration fee of \$5 includes the training, Friday evening snack, and Saturday snacks. Please bring a lunch. High school youth are free and must attend with a paid adult.

THE GIFT OF A WARM SHOWER

By Charles Austin

It was October 2012 when Hurricane Sandy brought the Jersey Shore tons of unwanted ocean water and massive damage from tides, wind and rain. But thanks to the vision and work of Lutherans in Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere, a “shower truck” brings welcome relief to hundreds of volunteers helping people with the long-term recovery from the devastation caused by one of the most destructive storms ever to hit the East Coast.

Lutheran Church of the Reformation in West Long Branch, N.J., is a mile from the ocean. Members and their neighbors lost homes and businesses, but the church was spared and quickly became a focal point for relief efforts. Matthew Cimorelli, pastor at Reformation, said, “We were a food pantry, a clothes closet and a place where people could come, cook meals, warm up and recharge their electronics, and get water, blankets and other aid.” Matthew says the congregation maintains good relations with neighbors and local civil authorities and said he asked the town, “What do you need us to do?” adding “that became our mantra” for the months ahead.

As recovery progressed, the need for meals declined, so the congregation became host to volunteers helping people clean up and rebuild their homes. Members from Reformation had volunteered in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and understood the need. It soon became an ecumenical effort. Long Branch Covenant Church rented space in Reformation before building their own church a mile away, and as volunteers began to pour into New Jersey, both congregations arranged to house the welcome workers. “They didn’t have a kitchen, so everyone came to our church to eat,” Matthew said. But volunteers working all day in mud and dirt needed more than a place to eat and sleep. They needed a way to clean up.

About 500 miles south in Virginia was an answer to their needs. Members of Virginia Lutheran Men in Mission had been working weekends for almost a year to fund and build a shower trailer in partnership with Lutheran Family Services of Virginia. With funds from Lutheran Disaster Response – U.S., they were able to complete the construction of the shower trailer and tow it to New Jersey for use in the recovery work after Hurricane Sandy. The new shower trailer was easy to tow to where it was needed with its four shower stalls, water heater, two washers and dryers for volunteers to wash their clothes, and the ability to hook it up to local water sources.

Since its completion, the Lutheran Family Services of Virginia Disaster Shower and Laundry Unit trailer has been parked at the Long Branch Covenant Church in New Jersey where the dozens of volunteers housed there and at Reformation clean up after their day’s work.

Although nearly a year and a half has passed since Hurricane Sandy, it looks like the shower truck will be needed for some time, said Amy Pennenga, disaster recovery coordinator for Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey. There are still thousands of homes needing repair, she said, and Lutheran Disaster Response – U.S. helps connect volunteers from around the country to work with local volunteers as the rebuilding of the Jersey Shore continues. Amy estimates that the rebuilding will take at least five more years. Surging storm waters brought destruction to large parts of the Atlantic seaboard, but volunteers engaged in the recovery work now experience the welcome waters of showers and washing machines that help refresh and encourage them in continuing God’s work of serving their neighbors — wherever they may be — and for however long it takes.

Charles Austin is a retired ELCA pastor who has served parishes in Iowa, New York and New Jersey. He has also been a reporter for The New York Times and other news organizations.

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

314 S. Spruce St., Suite A
Spokane, WA 99201-5823



Let Down the Nets

*Lifting Our Vision
Jesus First, Last, Always
God's Grace, Our Gratitude
The Spirit Powers Us
No Fear! Transformation
Connections Multiply Miracles
Go, Tell & Serve*

April 2014 Newsletter

Please reproduce any and all articles for publication in congregational newsletters or bulletins.

The **Cross Connection** is also available on the synod website at

<http://www.ewaidsynod.org/synodpublications.html>.

Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.



Synod Calendar

March 2014

28 Assembly Resolution/Nomination Deadline

April 2014

- 4-5 Rev. Alan Roxburgh at Whitworth University
- 6 St. John's Sprague Sausage Feed
- 7 Synod Assembly Registration Deadline
- 12 LCSNW Chocolate and Champagne Gala
- 26 LCM-EWU Auction at Central Lutheran Spokane
- 26 Ventures Training at Zion, Spokane Valley

May 2014

- 2 Ventures Workshop at Tree of Life, Yakima
- 3 Mission Interpreter Training at Immanuel, Moses Lake
- 4 Bloomsday
- 16-18 Synod Assembly in Spokane, WA
- 19 Synod Office Closed
- 26 Memorial Day (Synod Office Closed)
- 31 **SALLT at Messiah**



Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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eGiving: It's about More Than Money

Money doesn't buy all that it used to; neither do we spend it the way that we used to. In 2010, electronic payments accounted for 75 percent of all financial transactions. But in churches that same year, 90 percent of gifts came via cash or check. Not surprising when as few as one in ten churches offer parishioners the opportunity to give electronically.

Church leaders consistently offer three reasons for why they are slow to change: electronic transactions will rupture the traditional act of giving funds in worship service, it's too expensive, and it's too complicated. These concerns are fair. But here's the catch—if your congregation hasn't enacted online giving, it is missing an opportunity to expand the way members think about giving.

Don't Mess with the Offering Plate

A Virginia pastor recently summed up what hundreds of pastors have said about electronic giving: "The act of giving is, and has always been, central to the act of worship. Electronic giving could well undermine this."

Experience and data suggest those concerns deserve a second look. In the pews in any given worship service there are three types of people. Each group responds to calls for giving in different ways. Online giving will assist some more than others, but traditional giving practices can continue to have a prominent place in worship.

- *Established Members.* This group may or may not respond to online giving. Some will embrace it because it's easier; others will prefer dropping their offerings in the offering plate. **Net benefit:** No change—this group will give regardless. Online giving may make their act easier, but it won't motivate them to give more.
- *Engaged Nonmembers.* Increasingly, a growing percentage of people are not connected to worship services on a regular basis. In fact, 30 to 60 percent of people in a given congregation fit this category. Therefore eGiving makes it possible for people who want to give regularly, but do so erratically

because they are not regularly in worship, to do so. **Net benefit:** Possible significant positive change because giving is not tied to regular worship attendance.

- *Visitors.* These are people who probably feel comfortable giving during the service—indeed, they may expect to. Some new online giving opportunities are emerging (QR codes that allow people to give using their mobile device, for example), even while traditional giving modes remain attractive. **Net benefit:** May increase giving for some because people expect to make a financial gift during a worship service.

Free the Spirit

Leaders may still resist online giving for fear that they are asking eGivers to sit through an offertory with no chance to physically engage in the act of giving. Or they fear that eGivers may feel like they're being asked to give more than once. This need not be the case: eGiving may actually liberate this portion of the worship service for expanding on the idea of giving back.



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Among the options some churches practice:

- **Project giving.** In addition to the traditional offering, some worshipping communities use the offertory to highlight a special project, educate the community about its value, and collect funds. Projects can include humanitarian aid, special building funds, feeding programs, or mission work.
- **Telling the story.** Some use this time to have individuals talk about how giving has strengthened and improved their spiritual lives, or about the good that comes from their gifts. Giving becomes not a one-sided affair—the church asks, the people give—but a community event that gets everyone involved in both giving and celebrating the good that comes from financial gifts.

Mind the Cost

While it's true that most eGiving comes with a cost, not all costs are the same. In fact, it's a misnomer that the term "eGiving" refers to only one method of giving because there are many possibilities.

- **Online Banking:** In online bill pay, the donor authorizes an amount to be sent to the congregation through the donor's financial website.

The Good: Nothing for the church to do; no cost.

The Bad: Time lag from authorization to payment.

The Tricky: Usually, givers can set up recurring payments, but not all will. You will need to remind people about giving with monthly or quarterly statements.

- **Electronic Funds Transfer:** Known as EFT, this involves the church's financial institution receiving a fund from the donor's bank or financial institution.

The Good: Once set up, it's easy; recurring payments can be established.

The Bad: The church has to set it up, and costs vary greatly.

The Tricky: Good EFT providers are out there, but there are a lot of them and leaders need to practice due diligence.

- **Credit and Debit Cards:** Works the same as an EFT, but with credit or debit cards.

The Good: Same as for EFT.

The Bad: Same as for EFT.

The Tricky: The last thing many churches want to do is to encourage people to take on debt; it is possible with some providers to limit these transactions to debit cards only.

- **PayPal:** A third-party vendor through which parties exchange funds.

The Good: Easy and fast to set up.

The Bad: Many people are turned off by these services, and they can be clunky for users.

The Tricky: If you go this route, stay on top of changes in fee structures.

Throw Me a Lifeline!

Concerns over complexity are clearly legitimate. Online giving requires serious planning and testing. And eGiving represents a cultural change in how churches operate. Because of this, church leaders should consider the following strategy:

Come to the table. Most people expect to be able to pay for things electronically. So unless the church is very small or it ministers to a community where a majority don't conduct their day-to-day affairs through traditional banking institutions, eGiving is here to stay.

Come with a servant's heart. Although eGiving usually increases the total number of dollars given, a more important reason is serving members. Through eGiving, educational opportunities to talk about financial responsibility and stewardship arise. Through highlighting service, eGiving showcases ways to support the church's ministries, the community, and the world.

Come with a worshipful spirit. Far from a threat to the traditional practice of gift-giving, eGiving can free members to think broader and deeper about giving.

Come with a student's mind. The eGiving world is constantly in flux as new systems and better ways of moving money come online. Stay atop the trends and don't be afraid to make a change if deemed appropriate.

Come with an analyst's attitude. Measure the results. Ask parishioners what works best for them. If it's failing, end the program. And if it's succeeding, work to discover how to improve.

Make It Easy

Make it easy for your congregation to use these new tools. Explain what the church is doing—on the website, with videos, in newsletters, in materials to new members, and in quarterly or annual statements. Most people today expect to be able to transact business electronically. Let them know they can and how. But most importantly, let them know why.

About the Writer: Martin Davis owns Sacred Language Communications, formerly directed Alban's Congregational Resource Guide, and has 20 years of experience working with congregations (www.sacredlanguagecommunications.com).

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