

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

March 2015

God's Beloved People,

As part of my continuing education, and in the company of 40 others from the Conference of Bishops, Susan and I traveled to Germany for the first 13 days of January. Though a post-Christmas head-cold turned into full blown bronchitis during the trip, we had an amazing and fruitful journey. By this note I want to fulfill one part of the purpose of this pilgrimage, to encourage you to consider your own trip to the land of Luther around the observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation (2017).

I've been telling everyone that, like the trip to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, such a pilgrimage probably ought to be planned as the first of two trips! The first experience of these sites is so overwhelming and challenging that I think it takes a second trip to begin to absorb all that matters. That said, some strong impressions stand out:

--Our synod will be present for years to come in the tree (a Common Medlar) we planted in the Reformation Forest below the Castle Church in Wittenberg. This beautiful garden of trees is in memory of Martin Luther's famous quote, paraphrased, "if I knew tomorrow was my last day on earth I would plant a tree today." As a synod we have planted a tree on the promise of God's "tomorrow" and I will be inviting each of our congregations to plant a tree in 2017 to reflect this same promise.

--Bishop Guy Erwin, a professor of Reformation history and theology, preached in Luther's pulpit in the "town church" on Christmas 2. I'll not forget his powerful words nor the appointments in the sanctuary: Cranach's famous triptych; a carving of a soldier kneeling before the crucified Christ; and what appeared to be the hilt

of a sword piercing the pulpit crown, a reminder that "...the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...able to judge the thought and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12).

--Our visit to the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt where Luther studied. It was in the Chapter room that we walked the same cobbled stones that Luther walked, and it was in this sanctuary where Luther prostrated himself during his ordination service. Though hundreds of years separate us Luther continues as one of the saints named Martin who have guided and taught me. In these spaces I was as "close" as I'm likely to get!

--We went to the concentration camp at Buchenwald on a very cold and windy day and tried to imagine what it was to be captive in this hideous place. In the distance, despite winter, were green rolling hills and fields, small towns where people like us lived in proximity to the camp. There is a deep-cold ambiguity in the human heart! Buried in the ground is a memorial, a flat, metallic plate, perpetually heated to 98.6 degrees, a reminder that warm hearts occupied this same holy ground.

--Wartburg Castle, the Bach House in Eislaben, Luther's baptismal church in Eisenach. So much more! We are heirs to a lived and living tradition that still exerts power today! I pray you have a chance to experience it, and along the way contribute to the restoration of these formerly East German communities.

Bp Martin Wells



Sharing My Process: Setting Goals

by **Pastor Helga Jansons** Director for Evangelical Mission

ELCA staff are required to set goals every year and then at the end of the year there is a Performance Review based on these goals. I am deployed ELCA staff. The process is so good that I am sharing it with you because it can be used for Pastors, committees and the congregation. I invite you to consider how what I write might apply to your position of leadership. Goal setting can lead to a Mission Plan which should be developed each year because either the goals were accomplished and new ones need to be developed, or, if they have not been accomplished the goals may need to be reworked.

So here is how it works for me. There are certain expectations and responsibilities that go with my position. Then there are also particular needs of the synod which is my “congregation” or context. The Bishop, my immediate supervisor (Council president could do this) named some of the needs for the synod. Then I met with him to ask for clarification to make sure I understood what was meant and some idea of how he thinks some of the goals might be carried out. Next I put into writing a draft of my goals, including our conversation and expanding upon the Bishop’s goals to include some of the action steps.

Next, I sent my draft to my ELCA coach (we have synod coaches available for Pastors and lay leaders) and we scheduled a coaching session. She asked me good questions, and made sure that my goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time oriented. It makes all the difference for someone else to ask me questions like how many churches will you call, what are 5 questions you will ask, what other information will you need, how will you know if this is effective, who will help you to discern whether to continue the program, and when will you have this accomplished? Such questions help me to be more intentional and to be accountable to someone along the way, rather than at the end of the year. A coach is someone who is “in your corner” and willing to ask big questions in an impartial way.

So here is an example. One of my responsibilities is to be Stewardship Education coordinator for the synod (a larger version of the stewardship chairperson’s job in a congregation). The best education that has been offered around this synod is Ventures for Growing Stewards. We have 6 leaders in the synod who were trained in Chicago to lead this workshop series. 32 congregations have participated in these. One goal as stated by the Bishop is to offer stewardship education by reinvesting in Ventures. There are 2 action plans for this. 1. Follow up on those congregations whose members attended the workshops. 2. Discern whether Ventures should continue in its present form for churches who did not attend. If so, then we may need new leaders since two of our Ventures leaders have become Net-Wworkers. My SMART goals include Specifically communicating with every congregation to ask 5 questions (see below). In order to Measure the impact of Ventures I have asked Research and Evaluation to send me the congregational giving patterns of every congregation. Mission Support has decreased recently but that doesn’t mean congregational giving is down. It is Achievable that each congregation is called, but it is more Realistic for me to invite other Ventures leaders to help me make the calls. One has said yes already. It will be Timely for me to have this done by next Synod Council meeting (April 24th) so we can discern together whether to reinvest in Ventures or offer something less intensive.

1. Share how your stewardship team / committee is functioning.
2. How do you emphasize stewardship in the congregation throughout the year; give examples.
3. How has the congregation responded to the narrative budget?
4. What part of the Ventures program was most effective for your congregation?
5. What impact has the Ventures program had on financial giving?



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 – Immanuel	NV	Kimberly Meinecke	I
P	Caldwell, ID – Faith Lutheran	NV		
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	NV	Betty Krafft	SP
P	Firth, ID – Bethel Lutheran	A	Paul Malek	TEEM
P	Gifford, ID – Good Hope Lutheran	A	Valerie Beesley	TEEM
P	Grandview, WA – Immanuel Lutheran	B	Gary Rhode	
P	Horseshoe Bend – Grace Lutheran	NV	Tom Christensen	I
P	Jackson, WY – Shepherd of the Mountains	NV		
P	Kamiah, ID – Faith Lutheran	A	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Kennewick, WA– Lord of Life	A	Ron Shipman	I
P	Orofino, ID – Ascension Lutheran	A	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Sandpoint, ID – First Lutheran	B	Bob Chenault	I
P	Spokane, WA – Bethlehem Lutheran	NV	Steve Wee	SP
P	Spokane Valley, WA – Zion Lutheran	A	Mike Grabenstein	I
P	Thayne, WY – Star Valley United Church	C	Al Schoonover	SP
P	Terrace Heights, WA – Tree of Life	NV		
TM	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	NV	Jillian Ross	TM

Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center *in Bellingham, Washington*

is looking to hire a camp nurse for summer 2015. We would love to hire one nurse for the entire summer, but if you are only available for one or several weeks, we would be open to that, as well. If you are interested in making a difference in kids' week at camp by making sure they are in a safe environment, please email program@camplutherwood.org with a resumé.

Presiding bishop

We need to talk

Church the appropriate place for deep, honest, even painful conversation about race



MICHAEL D. WATSON

This summer and fall our country was shaken by violence—the violent encounters between police and young African-American men in Ferguson, Mo., New York and Cleveland, and the violence of communities of color reacting to decisions of grand juries. And, just before Christmas, we were saddened and sickened by the assassination of two New York City police officers as they sat in

their patrol car. So much loss of life. Such a forfeit of hope.

What had happened to us that our country and communities should so quickly fracture? And how could it be that people living in the same place and time, breathing the same air, could have such different experiences of life in the U.S.?

Just after the grand jury announcement in the Ferguson case, the staff at the Lutheran Center in Chicago got together for lunch and conversation. Staff members who are people of color talked about their experience of race in the U.S. Person after person told stories of being followed by store employees when shopping; of uncomfortable encounters with law enforcement; of the need to teach their children, especially their sons, specific ways to behave when stopped by police; and which neighborhoods to avoid.

These are your staff. They are decent churchgoing family people who work for the ELCA because they believe in our mission and want to make the world a better place in Jesus' name.

I also think about all the members of law enforcement whom I've served as a parish pastor. I can't think of a single one who made the decision each day to harass people of color. These were decent churchgoing family people who went into law enforcement because they wanted to make the world a better place, even at the potential risk of their own lives.

At its root this is not about law enforcement and the legal system. I wouldn't want to live in a community that didn't have police. This is a broken and sometimes dangerous

world. The first use of the law (the commandments) is that "external discipline may be maintained against the unruly and the disobedient" (Formula of Concord, Article VI). In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther teaches us that an orderly community and good government are part of what we ask for when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

No, the tension now between communities of color and law enforcement and the different perception of and reaction to Ferguson and New York by white Americans and African-Americans is a symptom of a deeper issue—the issue of race in this country. It's difficult to talk about this for many reasons: we don't want to believe racism still exists in 21st-century America, we want to believe that we're past that as a society, it makes the majority culture feel defensive, we don't want to be thought of as racist, and it's just plain hard to talk about.

But not talking about it won't make it go away. Some might argue that the church is no place for such a "political" issue, that we should be concerned with the spiritual, not the temporal. But I'm convinced that not only is the church the appropriate place for this conversation, it might be the only place where the deep, honest, even painful conversation

about race can take place so people feel they have been heard, and change and healing can happen.

The church has many resources to help members and congregations talk with each other about race. "Talking Together as Christians

about Tough Social Issues" and "Talking Together as Christians Cross-Culturally: A Field Guide" are two ELCA publications available online (search for these titles at www.elca.org). Our bishops and synod staffs are ready and willing to walk with congregations as we engage in this.

But the greatest resource we have comes to us new every day: baptism. In baptism we are claimed by Christ—held fast by Christ, loved by Christ with a love so strong no power in heaven or earth can separate us from it (Romans 8:31-39). In baptism, sin and death have been beaten. In baptism, we have been made new. Redeemed, loved, free people can talk to each other about race.

We need to talk. □

[H]ow could it be that people living in the same place and time, breathing the same air, could have such different experiences of life in the U.S.?

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 February 2015 issue of The Lutheran. Reprinted with permission.

ReconcilingWorks, an organization that is working for “full participation” of LGBT people in our church has produced a resource entitled “Your People Shall Be My People: Stories, Questions and Resources for Conversations About Marriage for All Loving, Committed Couples.” This is intended to be a resource for LGBT couples and for pastors and congregational leaders as these couples seek the ministry of marriage and support for their families. This resource is available for download at

<http://www.reconcilingworks.org/resources/marriageconvo>

Given that two of the states in our synod now permit gay marriage, this is resource that I believe may be useful to congregations. –Bishop Wells

Lutheran Staff Association 2015 Annual Conference

CALM Conference of Associated Lay Ministers

April 19-22, 2015

Lutherhaven - Coeur d’Alene, Idaho
Speakers JoAnn Hand and Mary Morrow

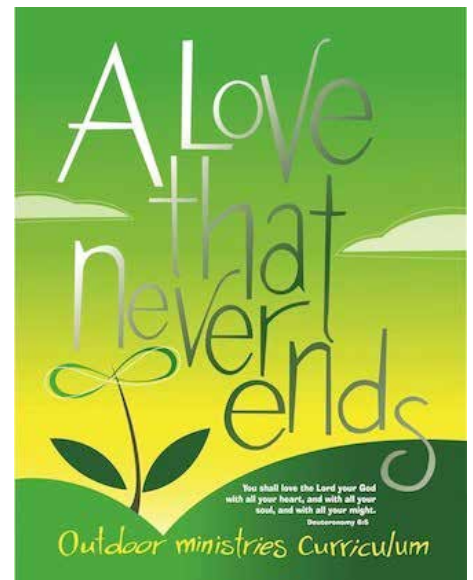
<http://lutheranstaffnw.org/Conference.html#registration>

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Offers Curriculum Package for VBS

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, a non-profit organization that supports the outdoor ministries of the ELCA, has a Vacation Bible School Curriculum for use by congregations. They’ve taken the preschool, lower elementary/day camp Bible studies and bundled it with the crafts, games, and graphics sections of this year’s curriculum, A Love That Never Ends, and have made it available to congregations.

The curriculum is perfect for churches looking to create continuity between the camp and VBS experience, or those simply looking for a new and creative approach to VBS. Plus, this VBS curriculum is also great for churches who are trying to be a little more green. The curriculum is downloaded once it is purchased, so churches don’t need to worry about the extra waste (or cost) that comes with buying a fancy boxed VBS set.

For more information, visit the following website
www.lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum.





German Style Dinner

Beer and Wine Available
With Dessert Auction



March 14, 2015

Happy Hour at 4 PM | Dinner served at 5 PM

Advent Lutheran Church

13009 E Broadway Ave
Spokane Valley, WA

\$20 per Person | \$150 if Purchase a Table of Eight

Tickets, donations or questions please contact:

Pastor Shelley Wee

509.951.5701

pastor@lcmewu.com

www.lcmewu.com

****Change this year: A smaller auction and an opportunity
to pledge your support for LCM-EWU following dinner****

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

Cash, Check and Credit Cards Accepted (Check preferred)

Is your congregation looking for a new direction for Service Projects?

You might consider Urban Servant Corps. They are based in Denver, Colorado and offers many opportunities.

www.urbanservantcorps.org.

Theologically Sound Resources

Times are changing quickly and the Association for Lutheran Resource Centers (ALRC) is looking at ways that it can be most helpful to synods - and particularly people in congregations who are looking for theologically sound resources.

One step the ALRC has taken has been to create our own Pinterest page where resources are posted. As the coordinator of ELCA resource centers, the Pinterest page currently falls under my name. But, I have invited my ALRC colleagues to post the "theological sound" resources they come across to the boards on this particular Pinterest page as well. Along with ELCA resources posted, there are many wonderful ecumenical resources that can be helpful to ELCA congregations - whether they are stewardship, Christian education, leadership development resources, or other congregational resources!

Here is the link for ELCA Resources Pinterest page:
<http://www.pinterest.com/KMatthiasLong/boards/>



Seminars Offered this Summer at Calvin College

Cruciform Humility in Christian

Preaching and Worship

June 21-26, 2015

Director: Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

(Calvin College)

Fundamental Practices for Intellectual Humility

June 21-July 3, 2015

Directors: Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung (Calvin College), Kevin Timpe (Northwest Nazarene University), and James Van Slyke (Fresno Pacific University)

America and China:

150 Years of Aspirations and Encounters

NEH 2015 Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers

Seminars@Calvin

E-mail: seminars@calvin.edu

Phone: (616) 526-8558

Fax: (616) 526-6682

For application information: www.calvin.edu/scs
 Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan



Join us on Facebook!

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

Have You Taken Your Health Assessment Yet?

For more information regarding the Mayo Clinic's Assessment being used by ELCA Leaders in conjunction with Portico, follow the link below. Earn Wellness Dollars, save money on premiums, feel well and be healthy!

<http://www.vasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Mayo-Clinic-HA-FAQ-2013-Revised.pdf>

Please take the fifteen minutes needed to help our synod save over \$19,000

Mission Intent Forms

Were mailed on January 12

Have you returned yours?

... so that you could have them on hand for your annual meetings.

Please consider your support, and return to the synod office.

If you didn't receive one, please contact us at

509-838-9871 or office@ewaidsynod.org

Mileage Reimbursement Rates Have Changed

The rate is now **57.5¢** per mile.

Rostered Leader Reports to the Bishop

Are **NOW** available.

There had been a delay in getting the reports from the ELCA, and they are now available at

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

Parochial Reports

Are available on the ELCA website <https://webapps.elca.org/FormAAndC/Login.aspx> and are due February 15, 2015

Pray with us



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

Please remember AIM Sharon Lone- Browder as she grieves the passing of her husband Jon Browder who died February 2nd, 2015.

Rev. Laura Lynn, for more continued recovery and healing.

The family of Rev. Steve Crittendon (Our Savior - Twin Falls, ID) on the birth of granddaughter Koral Prayers for new beginnings, and and the ability to accept endings.

For congregations and pastors in call process, may their anxiousness be positive and productive.

For those who suffer loss, may they find hope.

For those struggling to make sense of their world, may they find the peace of Christ.

For those facing the struggles of aging, may they find the joy of youth.

For those with medical concerns, may they find comfort and healing.

For those who strive to make the world a better place, may their work be fruitful, and appreciated.

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

Lutheran Men in Mission

Did you know that there is an organization in the ELCA just for men? Lutheran Men in Mission got its start in 1988 and has been reaching out to men ever since. Their vision is “For every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ.” They work to strengthen men’s Christian faith, relationships, witness and service in their homes, congregation and communities. They also work to provide resources to congregations such as the Master Builder’s Bible and Bible study resources.

In 2014, Lutheran Men in Mission unveiled its newest plan for certifying Men’s Ministry Specialists. Those individuals who have a passion for men’s ministry and who sense a calling to be a leader in their congregation and community, and want to help develop new and innovative ministries in their area will be trained. There are four stages that focus on personal, one-on-one, small groups, and larger group development. There will be ongoing conversations and tools that will be shared about faith and ministry so that men can explore together what men in our communities need and are searching for, all too often alone. Discipleship of men is changing and Lutheran Men in Mission will boldly navigate what that looks like in this new generation. Those who continue as Mission Specialists will be provided with ongoing support as they work in their local congregations. A panel of men will assist and guide these men as they implement and apply all they have learned.

Service can be out of the box, and still praise God and serve others. Members of the Lutheran Men in Mission of Burke Lutheran Church in Madison, WI provided free tire pressure checks one Sunday before and after worship. They serviced 73 tires including the church’s wheelbarrow. The event was in response to a challenge from the Northeastern Iowa Synod as part of their “Care of Creation Work Group” effort. Properly inflated tires save money and help God’s creation through improved fuel mileage yet correct inflation is often overlooked. Well done men!

For more information on beginning a Lutheran Men in Mission group in your congregation, contact the Program Manager, Kevin Burke at kevin.burke@elca.org, phone: 920-562-1411.

And thank you for your mission dollars (benevolence) which supports this ministry to bring more men back to church!

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



**March 2015
Newsletter**

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



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.ewaidynod.org/synodpublications.html>.
Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.

Synod Calendar

February 2015

- 20-21 Building Bridges - Pasco First Lutheran
- 24 Assembly Committee Meeting
First Lutheran - Kennewick

March 2015

- 6 2015 Synod Assembly
Resolution and Nomination Deadline
- 8 LCS Fundraiser Lunch - Kennewick, WA
- 13 Assembly Registration Deadline

April 2015

- 3 Good Friday - Synod Office Closed
- 5 Easter
- 19-21 Lutheran Staff Association Retreat @
Lutherhaven
- 24 Synod Council Meeting - Pasco, WA
- 24-26 2015 Synod Assembly - Pasco, WA

May 2015

- 25 Memorial Day - Synod Office closed



Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our Hands

Staff

- Bishop The Rev. Martin Wells
- Director for Evangelical Missions .. The Rev. Helga Jansons
- Program Administrator Cathy Steiner
- Assembly Manager Karla Olson
- Communication Director Gib Dominguez
- Net-Worker Linda Howell
- Net-Worker The Rev. David Kappus
- Net-Worker Kristin Koskella
- Net-Worker Jim Peterson

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Editor: Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

March 2015 - Volume 23, Number 3

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What Churches Can Do to Increase Social Media Security

As email gained popularity in the mid-1990s, company leaders feared their employees would spend too much time with it and tried to limit employees' email use. Then spam came along, making people even more nervous.

Today even the most anti-technology person knows that email is how information moves. Most also know that several commonsense safeguards go a long way to reduce risks—do not open emails or download attachments from people you don't know, nor should you trust that a Nigerian prince will give you \$100,000 for allowing him to use your bank account to transfer his fortune to the United States.

Social media and online payment technology is in that "big deal" stage. Those in faith communities remain wary. Because they still do not quite know what to make of it, they would just as soon abandon social media as try to use it. However, social media and online payment systems make staying in touch and supporting the organizations we believe in far easier. But what about all those hacking horror stories recounted in the news? Could your congregation really be at risk for hackers stealing bank account numbers? Personal information? Photos? Yes. Fortunately, a few commonsense strategies help to keep you and your congregation safe.

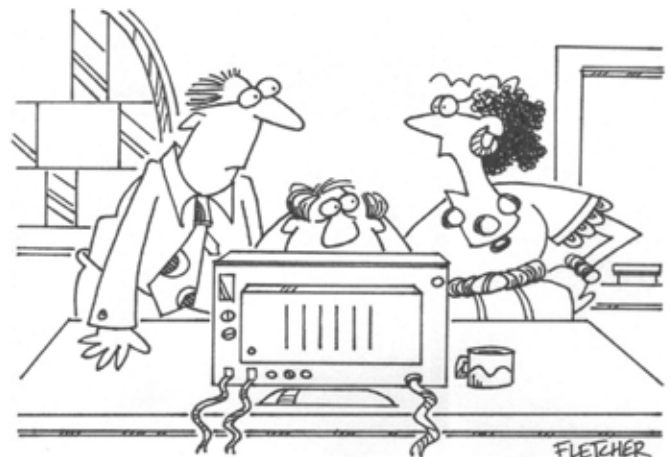
Social Media Security Basics

No matter how you manage your social media and online payment tools, following four basic rules substantially reduce the risk of someone breaking into church accounts and stealing your congregations' personal information.

- *Create safe passwords.* This is hardly new advice but many people still ignore it. If your church's security passwords use names, common number combinations, addresses, email addresses, or common words, you are making it easy for someone to get into your account. Use a site like passwordsgenerator.net to create secure passwords that cannot be easily stolen. Write it down with pen on paper, and store it away. To make life even easier,

join a single sign-on site such as lastpass.com to simplify login and vastly improve security.

- *Use the most up-to-date browser.* When you turn on your computer, a message often appears telling you a browser update is available. Because most browser updates involve closing security breaches that have been exposed, you avoid security risks by installing the update. Take five minutes and keep your browser updated. Your chances of being hacked go way, way down.
- *Do not open links from unknown sources.* Spend five minutes on social media and you are bound to see something like this—"Hi, I just saw your pictures here [link]." Do not be fooled. Hackers use these tricks to install viruses and spyware on your computer. If anything looks suspicious, trust your gut and do not click on the link or open the file. If the note comes from a friend but looks funny, contact them and ask if they recently sent you an email. Chances are, their security has been breached and their site is being used to send bogus information.
- *Limit and protect your access information.* No one wants to believe that someone would take advantage of a church, but it happens. Therefore, limit



"I THOUGHT IT WAS A SECURE PASSWORD... WHO WOULD HAVE CONNECTED, 'LONG_SERMON_LOVERS' WITH OUR CONGREGATION?!"

the number of people who have access to your church's social media passwords. If your church has a professional technology person on staff, entrust that sensitive information with this person. Otherwise, the pastor and one key leader should be the keepers of passwords and account information. Although there are always people in your congregation willing to volunteer with social media, granting them access to church passwords and security information is a bad idea. Treat your passwords as you would treat your bank account. Be smart.

Added Security for Facebook and Twitter

Social media options are numerous and more are rolled out daily. Since Facebook and Twitter are the most commonly used, below are additional security guidelines.

Facebook. Churches love Facebook because it allows them to share photos, invite people to events, promote the congregation with targeted paid ads, create pages for groups within the church, and offers controls for who does and does not see posts.

But Facebook is not without its security problems. To begin, Facebook's security settings are notoriously difficult to understand. Take heart—there is help. CNET, an online tech magazine written with non-tech people in mind, offers seven keys to securing your Facebook page that should be required reading. Rather than replicate their advice, read it here: <http://www.cnet.com/how-to/secure-your-facebook-account-in-six-easy-steps/>. The advice includes how-to directions and will get you and your congregation in a safe space.

Several non-technical concerns arise with Facebook, such as the use of photos. There are many reasons people do not wish to have photos of themselves or, more likely, their children to appear on Facebook. People may work at jobs that require confidentiality or they may need to keep their identity secret. Parents worry, rightly, that posting photos and information about children can lead to identity theft. And some people are simply not comfortable posting their photos everywhere. When attendees join your congregation or begin to regularly participate, explain to them the social media tools currently in congregational use. Seek and secure their permission to use their photos.

Twitter. Churches are increasingly finding Twitter a useful tool for everything from connecting with the pastor to promoting events quickly among their constituency to sharing interesting information and discovering new friends. As with any other social media tool, Twitter can be hacked. Fortunately, if you follow the basic guidelines above, the congregations' security risks are minimal.

An additional step, however, will not only make your Twitter account more secure, but will make Twitter easier to use. HootSuite and TweetDeck were originally designed to help people manage their Twitter accounts and find the information they are searching for more easily. Increasingly, however, these sites are being touted for the extra level of security they bring to Twitter accounts. Both are critically reviewed, well tested, and highly reputable. Register with one of these and worry less about safety.

Securing Online Payments

Online payments are revolutionizing everything, including the way people give to their church. Multiple ways for handling online payments exist (see *The Parish Paper* issue for April 2014). In terms of security, there is obviously a lot at stake. Here are some simple tips:

- *Resist the temptation to create and manage an online payment system yourself.* Online payment systems are tricky, hard to navigate, and expensive. Instead, choose a solid third-party vendor to do this for your church. A number of organizations provide online payment options for churches. These can be a good bet, but review and watch for changes in the fees charged.
- *Consider PayPal.* This vendor is often criticized, but the truth is, PayPal is an incredibly secure way for people to send your congregation money.
- *Follow the basic security guidelines.* If your congregation's staff are handling online payments, following the basic advice given above is even more important. Those four simple rules will go a long way toward protecting church leaders and the congregation.

Final Thoughts

With good reasons, many people remain jittery about social media and online payments. But fear without smart action only heightens security risks. Fear not. Basic, commonsense tactics remove the majority of your church's security concerns.

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

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