

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

January 2014

God's Beloved People,

This issue of the Cross Connection will arrive at your mailbox or in your computer sometime in mid-December, 2013, most likely right around the time of Christmas. In addition, this newsletter carries the news of the synod and calendar for January, 2014, the New Year. What a unique moment, stretching as it does from the eternal to the day-to-day, from the promise of Christmas, into the unknown of the new year, the place and time during which the promise will be realized in-carnate, in the flesh, and in time, timely and timeless!

From the Foreword (written by Patrick Keifert) to "Being Promised: Theology, Gift and Practice," Gregory Walter, (Eerdmans), 2013:

"Making promises is a day-to-day practice and habit. Without promises, life does not move into the future. Those who refuse to make or to keep their promises frustrate the work God does with us to build a trustworthy world in everyday ways. The absence or failure of promise can easily break down the most basic human activities toward a healthy life for others and oneself."

Maybe I'm thinking of this because the story leading the day's news had to do with the financial exigency in Chicago and the threat to thousands of employee pensions, promises made during a lifetime of work and now threatened by the lack of capacity, or willingness, of the city to provide such pensions. This comes on the heels of Detroit's bankruptcy and the slowly evolving story of other cities in similar binds. Promises made; promises kept or broken.

I'm thinking of this as well because during the retreat with our first call pastors the speaker asked the bishops to reflect on the central notion that held life, ministry, and our theology together. Without hesitation I answered, "Promise." We worship a promise-making God!

Christmas is God's promise time, when into flesh comes God's participation in our daily lives. This God is no stranger to time and contingency but enters our time to make it holy and to make us whole again.

We were made people of this promise when God's promises of life were poured over us at the font, promises made on human lips but with divine power and consequence ever since God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.

New Year's Eve will bring with it an invitation to make resolutions for the New Year. Hear first God's "resolution," God's promise: You are mine! Nothing—even your failure to keep New Year's Eve resolutions—can keep you from being the object of this love. This is God's promise! Life is full of this promise. We fulfill life by sharing this promise, by "being promised" as we serve others in Christ's name.



Pastor Martin Wells, Bishop

How to talk about our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

by Pastor Helga Jansons

It is easy for congregations to feel alone in territory as vast as ours. It takes an intentional effort to keep a broader perspective alive. If you are reading this, you are a person who stays connected to the synod and are in a good position to share what the ELCA does. There is no “us and them” when it comes to the ELCA. We are all a part of the body of Christ; like an extended family. We are what the ELCA calls the “three expressions of the church; churchwide, synod and congregations”. “Together we do God’s work in ways that no individual, congregation or synod can do alone.” We have now functioned as one church body for 25 years since January 1988.

As of end of 2012 there were 3,950,924 baptized members in the ELCA. There were 9,533 congregations organized in 65 synods in nine geographic regions. There are 18,010 leaders on the ELCA roster including 998 associates in ministry, 64 deaconesses, 175 diaconal ministers and 16,773 ordained clergy.

Our synod consists of 95 ministries including 2 new Latino ministry starts. The synod holds an annual synod assembly for people to learn together and do business / make decisions. A “churchwide” representative always attends synod assemblies.

More than 15 people from our synod have received ministry training in Chicago in the past few years: Ventures for Growing Stewards, Mission Interpretation, Mission Developer training, synod table development. Future leaders in ministry – pastors, youth ministers, licensed lay ministers – are also trained by the ELCA. Chicago staff have also come to us on many occasions.

Coaches are available for pastors and Mission Developers, Building Consultants and funding through Mission Investment Fund. Health insurance, pension and other financial services are through Portico.

ELCA staff and members advocate for justice – around the country and globe. Lutheran Public Policy Office in Olympia is now called FAN – Faith Action Network and is ecumenical.

Specialized Ministries: Campus Ministries (our synod has 3) and Outdoor ministry (our synod has 4 including Holden Village), chaplains (around 10) and a Regional consultant to clergy.

ELCA funds a Director for Evangelical Mission position in every synod as a resource to local churches.

There are 70 New Ministry starts and the ELCA provides up to 50% of the funding in the form of grants, training and support.

We cannot be there for everyone as a congregation but each congregation’s Mission Support helps to send trained people who can. This way we can still do our part to help struggling or new and ministries. The ELCA’s motto is God’s Work. Our Hands. On our behalf – Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran World Hunger reach out to minister across the nation and globally To understand more see <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development>

Our churchwide body is great at building bridges and participates in Inter-faith and Ecumenical dialog.

There are many free online resources, information and stories of ministry available through the ELCA technology department. See www.elca.org www.thelutheran.org www.livinglutheran.org http://resources.elca.org/Congregational_Life-Stories_of_Faith_in_Action_SOFIA_2014.html



Please join us in prayers of celebration for these people celebrating anniversaries of ordination . . .

1/1/1989	Rev. Paul Palumbo	Lake Chelan Lutheran, WA	25 years
1/2/1994	Rev. Susan Shipman	Retired - Goldendale	20 years
1/15/1999	Rev. Ann Frerks	Ephrata - Quincy, WA	15 years
1/16/1999	Rev. Dawna Svaren	Beijing, China	15 years

Still Available

Synod Directories are now available in paper form and on disk in PDF format. Please call us at 509-838-9871 or email office@ewaidsynod.org to get your copy.

Synod Mission Support Update Fiscal Year ~ February 1, 2013 - January 31, 2014

2012	November	\$66,005	Year to Date	\$581,191
2013	November	\$73,599	Year to Date	\$628,888

SHARE Fund News

The Synod SHARE Fund (Synod Help And Response Endowment) will once again be making grants in the three traditional categories: New Mission endeavors; Sabbatical support for congregations and rostered leaders; and emergency assistance for congregations and leaders. Applications for a SHARE grant are available from the office (office@ewaidsynod.org) and are due March 1. Grants will be announced at Synod Assembly in May. Looking for a great place to make a gift? The SHARE Endowment has given away more than \$250,000 over the last 10 years. To help make this Endowment grow send a gift to the Synod marked SHARE Endowment!

Lutheran Staff Association (LSA) Scholarships!

This organization exists to encourage and support lay employees of congregations—choir directors, administrative assistants, secretaries, youth leaders and others. Besides networking support the group sponsors an annual retreat where topics of common interest are pursued in more depth and personal, supportive relationships are established. This year the retreat will be held at Cannon Beach, OR, on March 9-12, 2014. Because of the outstanding support of congregations and leaders for the Portico Wellness initiatives, we have money to sponsor (registration and travel) three persons who have never had the opportunity to attend an LSA Retreat! Apply through Cathy Steiner at the synod office!

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)

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE
P	Boise, ID – King of Glory	A	Kari Sansgaard LP
P	Bonnors Ferry, ID – Trinity	NV	Kimberly Meinecke I
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	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

Katie Wee, daughter of Pastor Shelley Bryan Wee and Steve Wee, for continued healing after surgery

Prayers for Pastor Dawna Svaren's mother, Josey for recovery from a broken hip

The family of Rev. Kenneth Larsen (Oregon Synod). Pastor Larsen passed away Nov 20, 2013. We offer prayers of thanksgiving and mercy for his wife, Mary Hall

Pastor Laura Lynn (Bethel, ID) as she recovers from complications after surgery

Pastor Rick Evenson (Medical Lake, WA) as he continues treatment for multiple myeloma

Pastor Alan Eschenbacher (All Saints - Spokane) and his family as they mourn the passing of his father, Gus Eschenbacher on Nov. 30. Service held Dec. 7

Dr. Karen Bloomquist as she begins new work as Dean & Chief Administrative Officer at PLTS and CLU

Riley Hull, Grandson to Pastor Elliott and Linda Hull as he continues to battle illness

Pastor Janice Meier, for continued healing

Pastor Anne Frerks, upon installation and the start of new ministry

We also pray for . . .

all those who minister along the less travelled road

those whose lives become more difficult in these times of inclement weather

those pastors and congregations in the midst of call process

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

Let's "Pack the Civic"

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

6:30 pm Social hour with no host bar

7:30 pm Curtain

Tickets \$30.00 general seating



Crazy For You

is a romantic musical comedy featuring Gershwin hits including "Someone to Watch Over Me," "Embraceable You" and "I Got Rhythm." 1992 Tony Award for Best Musical.

FOR TICKETS:

Debra Grube (509) 926-5407
office@zionlutheranspokane.org

Christie McKee (509) 343-5020
cmckee@lcsnw.org

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Eastern Washington University encounters students exactly where they are and embraces them with God's grace and welcome.

Lutheran Campus Ministry at EWU:
Following Jesus, Loving All!

Lutheran Community Services Northwest is a non-profit human services agency helping children and families in our community who have been victims or witnesses to sexual assault and/or other violent crimes. We are privileged to touch the lives of people of all ages, cultures and faiths. Lutheran Community Services Northwest partners with individuals, families and communities for health, justice & hope.

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT LUTHERAN CAMPUS MIINISTRY AT EWU
&
LUTHERAN COMMUNITY SERVICES NORTHWEST

Tickets Make Great Holiday Gifts!

**The Uns ~
Reaching the
Uninvolved
by Ed Kruse**



Reach the Uninvolved and the Under-involved

You are invited to attend a webinar that is designed to help your congregation grow in the coming months and years. Please review the description below.



**Webinar #1
Reaching Out to the "Uns"**

Uninvolved, Under-involved, and Unclaimed (or Uninvited) members - what percent of the congregation members in our directories fall into this overall group? How did we get to the point where we are losing more members out the back door than come in the front door? In October 2012, the Pew Forum found that the "Religiously Unaffiliated" have increased by 33% in the USA in the last 10 years. What does "embracing the Uns again for the first time" mean?

Experience how stories, practical ideas and case studies inform our congregation's ministries.

Webinar Dates & Times:

- 1) December 7, 2013 - 9:00 AM (CST) - 60 minutes
- 2) December 18, 2013 - 1:00 PM (CST) - 60 minutes

Price: \$49 for as many people as can fit into your room
To Register: See below

Registration

If you have any questions on this exciting webinar that will assist with the growth of your congregation, please contact:

Dr. Ed Kruse
President, HealthierChurch.org
ed.kruse@HealthierChurch.org
866-610-4496

Save by signing up for 3 webinars

<http://www.healthierchurch.org/conferencewebinar/>

- ~ Good - One webinar for \$49
- ~ Better - Two webinars for \$79
- ~ Best - All three webinars for \$99

Register at: <http://www.healthierchurch.org/resources/>

Offer Expires: December 18, 2013



**Continuing Professional
Education Opportunities**

Revelation

**Midwinter Theological
Conference**

Izaak Walton Inn - Essex, MT
January 27-29, 2014

Dr. Craig Koester

Revelation is a book that has generated both fear and hope. People inside and outside the church have been intrigued with its vivid word pictures of the Lamb and Beast, Babylon and New Jerusalem. Popular media features attempt to turn the book into a timeline of cosmic destruction, even as people in our pews experience the book in their worship and hymnody—often without knowing it. In these sessions we will explore Revelation's compelling witness to the Creator and the Lamb, and ask how the book might continue to speak through preaching, teaching and worship in our congregations.

Cost includes 2 nights lodging,
2 breakfasts, and full suppers

Staying in a single:

Regular \$418/New to Ministry,
LPA, lay \$408

Staying in a double:

Regular \$299/New to ministry,
LPA, lay \$289/Spouse not attending
sessions \$219

Commuters: Clergy \$80/New to ministry,
LPA \$70

Scholarship funds available to help with cost.

More Continuing Professional Education Opportunities

American and Lutheran Evangelicalism

February 25 Bethlehem - Kalispell, MT 9am-3pm

March 4 First English - Great Falls, MT 9am-3pm



Dr. Paul Seastrand – Pastor at Zion Lutheran in Lewistown

Lutherans who are comfortable being called “evangelical” are often curious about Christians called “Evangelicals” with a capital E. While Lutherans see themselves as evangelicals committed to infant baptism, liturgical worship, and a Bible infallible in matters of faith and salvation, Evangelicals see themselves committed to believer’s baptism, experimental worship, and a Bible infallible in nearly all matters. At the same time, many Lutherans are hard-pressed to distinguish the origins and deep differences between these two ways of being evangelical. This class outlines the history of Evangelicalism in America, along with the theology of believer’s baptism, the role of experience, the interpretation of the Bible, the understanding of ordained ministry, and the engagement with culture and politics. These, in turn, are compared to Lutheran teachings. We hope to gain additional perspective and depth on some of the enormous changes affecting Christianity today.

5 Contact Hours

\$65 Clergy and Rostered Leaders

\$30 LPA and lay ministers

A Bowen Family Systems Theory Workshop Inside/Outside: Emotional Triangles and Leadership

After “differentiation of self” the concept of the emotional triangle and its applications is widely considered the most important of the eight concepts of Bowen’s theory. This workshop of seven two-hour sessions will study triangles and self-differentiation, their relationship and application for emotional maturity and leadership. This workshop will be led by W. Thomas Soeldner, and is open to those who have a working knowledge of Bowen Family Systems Theory, and will be limited to the first eight persons who sign up. Sessions will be scheduled every two weeks beginning on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W Boradway Ave, Spokane, through the first week of April (dates and location for subsequent sessions will be determined by participants at the first session). To express interest or to ask questions contact Tom Soeldner at waltsoe@allmail.net or by phone at (509)270-6995.

The first session will be a thorough review of Bowen’s concept of the emotional triangle, which he called the basic molecule (the smallest basic unit) of any emotional system. The next five sessions will each consist of a short presentation on an aspect of emotional triangles and their relationship to self-differentiation followed by a consideration of case studies brought by participants. The final session will be case study work and a final summary of the triangle and self-differentiation

2014 Synod Assembly

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

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.

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MALAYSIA'S GRANT TO ELCA AIDS TYPHOON RELIEF

In a "remarkable act of accompaniment," the Lutheran Church in Malaysia sent \$10,000 to the elca to help meet the needs of survivors of Typhoon Haiyan. "This is an extraordinary and remarkable act of accompaniment. It is a privilege for the ELCA to count on the support of its companions," said the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, ELCA executive director for global mission. "We are being church together for the sake of the world, particularly the Philippines as they try to recover from this natural disaster."

"It is this togetherness in mission that brings us together as we embrace our respective church's gifts and engagements in mission," said Franklin Ishida, ELCA area program director for Asia-Pacific. "Our accompaniment with the Lutheran Church in Malaysia runs deep," said Ishida. The Lutheran Church in Malaysia contributed funds to the ELCA in 2008 to help survivors of an earthquake in Sichuan, China, and in 2011 to support earthquake and tsunami recovery efforts in Japan.

Through Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA members gave \$1 million to Lutheran World Relief for the distribution of cooking utensils, shelter repair kits and debris removal in typhoon-affected communities. Lutheran Disaster Response International is also providing assistance to the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, an ELCA companion. This response is being coordinated with The Lutheran World Federation. Financial gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response will be used 100 percent to support relief efforts for survivors of the typhoon. Information about Lutheran Disaster Response is available at www.ELCA.org/typhoon.

Reach Out!

2014 Lutheran Staff Association Conference

March 9-12, 2014

“I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.” - Psalm 119:48

Speaker: Rev. Mark Nelson

Coordinator for Missional Leadership
Region 1, ELCA



2014 Lutheran Staff Association Conference

Cannon Beach, Oregon

Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center - March 9-12, 2014

Workshops and Leaders

Ecumenism at Work in Alaska - Pr. Diane Krauszer, Mat-Su P.L.U.M.E. Outreach, Alaska

How to make PowerPoint Worshipful and not distracting - Laura Lease, LSA Board Member

Social Media - we've not yet settled on the speaker for this

Telecommuting - We all do it! How do you do it? - A Peer Discussion Group

Please visit us on Facebook If you have any questions please email us at lutheranstaff@gmail.com

There will be a \$25.00 late fee when registering after February 14th for the conference.

Where in the synod is that?



Did you know that the ELCA has a theological resource board on Pinterest? 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/>

See what's happening at
Luther Heights
<http://www.lutherheights.org>



November's photo was taken in the sanctuary at All Saints Lutheran Church - Spokane, WA. Please send us your photos for use in an upcoming newsletter.

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



January 2014 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 www.ewaidsynod.org.

Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.



God's Work. Our Hands.

Synod Calendar

December

- 23-27 Synod Office Closed - Christmas
- 31 Synod Office Closed - New Year

January 2014

- 1-2 Synod Office Closed - New Year's Day
- 16 Latino Table Meeting @ Faith - Toppenish
- 23 Executive Committee Meeting
- 24-25 Synod Council Meeting
(Prince of Peace - Spokane)
- 29 LCM-EWU and LCSNW Fundraiser
@ Spokane Civic Theatre "Crazy for You"

February 2014

- 23 PLU Sunday



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

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller and Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

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Big Ministry Trends for 2014

In his book about underdog strategies, Malcolm Gladwell recounts the biblical story of David and Goliath as a metaphor for the unexpected advantage. He gives examples of what he calls “the David opportunities,” those “occasions in which difficulties, paradoxically, turn out to be desirable.”¹ He claims that there is unexpected freedom that comes when people believe they have nothing to lose. He writes:

You see the giant and the shepherd in the Valley of Elah and your eye is drawn to the man with the sword and shield and the glittering armor. But so much of what is beautiful and valuable in the world comes from the shepherd, who has more strength and purpose than we ever imagine.

People of faith know that challenges for the church, in the long run, have always made it stronger.

David and the Church Face Goliath

For five decades, large-scale shifts in the economy, public values and beliefs, and social institutions have rocked the landscape for congregations and their leaders. What are the most significant trends calling leaders to creatively rethink what it takes to declare the gospel today?

Missing generations in congregations. Worshipers are older on average than the U.S. population. This age gap shows signs of increasing over time—up from an average worshiper age of 51 in 2001 to a projected average worshiper age of over 60 by 2020. The statistics reflect another ministry-altering age profile—the declining participation of worshipers under 45 years of age. Further, less than half of worshipers today have children still living at home.² Fewer congregations in the future will draw worshipers from all four generations (those with birthdates earlier than 1946; the Baby Boomers with birthdates of 1946 to 1964; Generation X born in the early 1960s to early 1980s; and the Millennials born after 1980).

Decline in weekly attendance. Fewer worshipers report attending worship services weekly. Instead, over the course of an average month, the percentage of worshipers attending all four weekend services dropped 2–5 percent compared to only a decade ago.

Growing numbers of unaffiliated adults. About one in five adults in the United States do not identify with any religion. The percentages are even higher among young adults under the age of 30. In fact, 30 percent report no religious affiliation. Over the past five years, the number of unaffiliated American adults soared to 33 million.³

Increasing diversity among members. The racial-ethnic makeup of congregations appears to be moving in a direction that reflects the diversity of the general population. As recently as 1998, almost three out of four congregations were predominately non-Hispanic, white churches (80 percent or more of the participants were white). That percentage dropped to 57 percent of congregations attracting more than 80 percent non-Hispanic whites by 2012. In addition, the latest study reveals that 44 percent of congregations have some African American families participating.⁴

Greater concentration of worshipers in large churches. The average congregation has fewer than one hundred people participating in worship or



BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY WAS
A GOOD FIT FOR PASTOR BOB.

other activities. Yet the typical worshiper attends a large church. The largest 10 percent of congregations draw more than half of all worshipers. Although this is a long-term trend, evidence suggests that the concentration of worshipers is rising.

More small churches. Other factors, in addition to the trends already mentioned, contributed to the surge in small churches. Many denominations planted churches fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred years ago in growing population areas. Those same communities stopped growing decades ago and some even experienced population decline. Thus, thousands of rural and small-town churches across America are located in places with fewer and fewer people.

Smaller budgets. Church expenses continue to escalate while the membership and resource base shrinks. One in three congregations reports a declining financial base. Funding one or more staff positions includes providing salaries, housing allowances, health-care benefits, and retirement plans. In addition, congregations further strain their budgets through building maintenance, electricity, and heating costs. In real dollars, most congregations raise more money than ever before, but their budget demands far outpace the monies coming in through contributions, endowments, or facility rentals.

Fewer full-time pastors serving one congregation. Although the majority of pastors still serve one congregation as a full-time minister, already about one in six Protestant pastors are part-time clergy. A common pattern among conservative Protestant churches is the bivocational pastor—holding down a secular job *and* a ministry position. One in three conservative Protestant pastors are bivocational compared to only 6 percent of mainline pastors. Multipoint or yoked parish assignments—where one pastor serves in two or more churches—is a more common among mainline Protestant pastors. Currently more than one in ten parish assignments involve multipoint service.

Lack of consensus about the pastor's role. The authority for pastoral leadership is based on (a) the calling to ministry as a vocation and (b) a profession built on education, training, and capabilities. When members place greater emphasis on calling than competence, disappointment and church conflict often result.⁵ Effective pastoral leadership requires a complex set of gifts and skills. Congregations need help articulating their primary mission, and then expressing this identity in worship, programs, and organizational structure. When members disagree about how ministry tasks should be carried out, their diverse perspectives about leadership style creates another layer of frustration and potential conflict.

Weakening institutional support for parish ministry. Denominational agencies—regional and national—and seminaries supply much-needed support for pastors and congregations. As the number of congregations and members decrease, the funding that congregations used to send on to support their work also dropped off. Staffing and mission program cuts, little continuing education for clergy, modest lay leadership development, and crisis management become the norm. Pastors feel it—they are expressing less satisfaction with the denominational support they receive.

Multiplying channels of communication. The explosion of new technology invites congregations to make use of mounting avenues for reaching out to members and the community. Finding leaders and members adept at new media use proves challenging for many congregations. Innovative technology use raises new questions about appropriate boundaries and ethical issues as congregations seek to share an ageless message.

Look for the Desirable in the Difficulty

Failure and defeat happen because well-worn strategies produce remarkably consistent results. God's work in the world depends on people of faith seeing with new eyes—the advantage or strength that is not obvious. Moving through difficulties always requires change and the willingness to let go of the past. Discuss these questions with others in the congregation.

- Looking back over the past ten years, which of these trends have had the greatest impact on our congregation's effectiveness?
- Reflecting on the congregation's future, where do you see openings for renewed creativity, strength, and purpose?
- What new strategies could we try to accomplish our ministry goals?

1. Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013), Kindle edition.
2. Research drawn from Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Leadership That Fits Your Church* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2012).
3. Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/non-es-on-the-rise>.
4. David Briggs, *Ahead of the Trend*, The Association of Religion Data Archives, <http://blogs.thearda.com/trend>.
5. Jackson Carroll, *As One With Authority*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

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