

# 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

May 2015

## *But go, tell, He's waiting in Galilee*

God's Beloved People,

I loved preaching on Easter!

That may seem funny to some of you, because you assume that pastors are eager to preach on Easter, but for me it's not a regular thing.

My normal pattern at Christmas Day and Easter is to hang back and see who needs support. This was the first time in many years when I had an assignment on Easter (Thank you, St Mark!) and, of course, it was the year when a couple of our dear pastors were sicker than dogs! Oh how I wished I could have called to say, "Let me take Easter for you!" But, no surprise, both of these intrepid pastors soldiered on and made the proclamation on Easter Day! Thank you pastors!

There are those who don't care for the Easter B texts, that is, the version of the resurrection story from St Mark, our primary guide for this year. Mark 16 is a spare chapter (originally just 8 verses) just like much of the rest of the book, and again, like the rest of Mark's gospel, it bristles with urgency and anticipation.

When the women come to the tomb with anointing spices and their own anxieties, instead of offering their devotion they are redirected in urgent language: "...go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him as he told you." At this the women flee from the tomb

trembling and full of astonishment, and they tell no one.

I wonder if we like our fear more than the urgency of Jesus to join him back on the road. Is it possible our astonishment around the resurrection is just a cover to avoid the day-in-day-out work of healing, exorcism, or encouragement in Jesus' name?

I was afraid this came across as "law" in my sermon... that somehow our actions and our discipleship count for more than the gift of life. But the truth is it is Jesus who awaits us in "Galilee," that is, in our home country, the place where we feel most comfortable. Jesus, through the power of his resurrected life, is waiting for us just as he said he would and it is the prospect of this great reunion that is the good news in the text. We're not going to be alone so long as we're where Jesus does his work, among the lame, the poor, the discouraged, the prisoners, and those suffering from mental afflictions.

The resurrection is real so long as we stay close to those for whom it is genuine good news. From their lips we hear "go, tell" with the enthusiasm of those for whom life has been saved, offering us a glimpse of Life and Life abundant.



Alleluia, Christ is Risen! Indeed!

Bishop Martin Wells

## TAKING ACTION

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

Sometimes a congregation's purpose comes along and it is so clear, that people know what to do. They respond from the heart. I remember the Sunday in worship when I prayed for God's guidance in how St Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church in Hoboken, NJ should spend the \$300,000 received as a bequest. That week, I received a phone call from the pastor in Camden, one of NJ's poorest cities, with a request for money for chairs for their fellowship hall. Our response was immediate and led to a relationship between congregations that lasted for a decade. A congregational purpose can also come from the "vocation" of one person such as the "Foster Parents' night out" at Christ Lutheran Church, Walla Walla. One person had the idea, researched it, and planned it with the congregation who got totally on board.

A sense of purpose is not always that clear. A congregation may need deeper discernment and listening together. This involves what the ELCA calls "The Three Great Listenings": listening to God (through Bible study mostly), listening to the congregation (motives, passion, gifts and abilities) and listening to the community (the newspaper, community leaders, acquaintances and strangers).

Last September I attended a five-day training on Faith Based Organizing in Chicago. It was all about taking action. We listened to scripture texts about God's power at work through people. Most people there had negative associations based on the misuse of power. However, when power was defined as "the ability to act" for God's purposes, we understood God's need for us to act.

We spent time listening to ourselves, our "self-interest" so as to understand our motives and passion for ministry. That way we can be clearer about what matters to us and why, and what we want to see happen in ministry. Now I start some meetings by asking about each person's self-interest. Another way to listen deeply to congregation members is to discern their individual gifts by doing a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. To discern the gifts of the whole congregation, the Asset Mapping process is the best.

Listening to the community means having conversations with people to discern their passion, their self interest in what they do, as well as their dreams and vision for the community. In ministry, taking action is of most value in response to a need in the community, or it could be at the level of the synod, the country or the world. The popular quote by Frederick Buechner on "vocation" is that "the place God calls you to, is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." To listen to a community and discern its "deep hunger" takes practice and some training. One to One conversations with some questions prepared in advance, and practicing these conversations among church members is good experience. The discernment process may also benefit from a feasibility study to test out whether an idea using the gifts and gladness of the church would be well received. Asking members to ask their neighbors and friends to fill out a paper or online questionnaire can do this.

So let's say you know what is needed and the congregation feels led to take action. You have a Mission Plan. However, plans can fail in the execution; the details. This is where being intentional is key. Asking for feedback on strategy can save time and effort. Hearing other congregations' stories, how they carried out their Mission Plan, and asking their leaders for advice can help. Also, pray often and keep listening.

May the power of God be at work within and through you, so that you may act to fulfill God's purposes!

Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established. The human mind plans the way but the Lord directs the steps. (Proverbs 16:3, 6)



## Call Process Status

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

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE	
P	Boise, ID – Immanuel Lutheran	NV	Kimberly Meinecke	I
P	Boise, ID – Immanuel Lutheran	NV		
P	Caldwell, ID – Faith Lutheran	B		
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	Jackson, WY – Shepherd of the Mountains	NV		
P	Kamiah, ID – Faith Lutheran	B	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Kennewick, WA– Lord of Life	A	Ron Shipman	I
P	Orofino, ID – Ascension Lutheran	B	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	Terrace Heights, WA – Tree of Life	NV		
TM	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	NV	Jillian Ross	TM

### Retirements

Rev. Jim Grunow, Shepherd of the Valley - Boise, ID will retire June 1, 2015

## *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](http://www.urbanservantcorps.org)

# Presiding bishop

By Elizabeth A. Eaton

## Coming to terms with the times

Creating programs, chasing youth trail telling the love of God



**W**hen I'm out and about in the church, I'm often asked what I plan to do to save small congregations, reverse the decline in membership, bring young adults back to church, increase mission support, make the ELCA truly multicultural, boost our relevance in the culture and fix Congress (well, not that last one). I have no plan to do any of that by myself, but I wonder if there is

a deeper concern in those questions that requires a deeper answer from all of us.

The world has changed and is changing. Residents of my mother's retirement community who waited weeks to receive letters from loved ones serving overseas during World War II are now on Facebook and regularly use Skype or FaceTime to visit with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Air travel that was once glamorous and rare for most of us is now, both in frequency and ambiance, a lot like taking the bus. It's not unusual, even in small-town America, to have Jewish, Muslim and Hindu neighbors or those with no religious affiliation at all. We are in a strange new world and don't really know how all this will shake out.

We might be tempted to overdo our efforts, to work harder and harder developing innovative programming, reading every manual on church growth, jazzing up our websites, being present on every possible social media platform. Maybe we should discover our congregation's niche: young adults, theology on tap, justice and advocacy, care of creation, ethnic specific ministry, pet blessing liturgies, urban church, rural church, big church, small church, virtual church, home church. We have done some version of all of this somewhere across the ELCA. And good for us. We need to be brave and daring. God can use our best imagination and innovation.

Or we might be tempted to circle the wagons and hold ever more tightly to what we have left. There is much that is

beautiful about our traditions and buildings and heritage. What will happen to all of that if our particular congregation ceases to exist? Who will bury our parents or us? Who will take care of the parish cemetery? This is when congregations begin eyeing visitors for their value as replacement parts.

My daughter and her significant other, who was running for county commissioner, attended a church pancake breakfast where they were swarmed by parishioners who didn't realize he was a candidate. All they saw were *young adults!* *Potential members!* It was an uncomfortable experience.

But why do we want people to join our church? What does church mean to us? When I have asked that question, people often spoke about church as community or family. People talked about the good and important work their congregations carried out to feed the hungry or shelter the homeless. Some said the best thing about their congregations wasn't programs but people.

It was rare that anyone mentioned God or spoke about an encounter with the transcendent. I don't believe our people lack faith or don't know Jesus, but I wonder if we have lost the language to speak about the love of God that has been given to us in the crucified and risen Christ. Maybe we just assume Jesus. Maybe Jesus has become like wallpaper: we know it's there and everyone can see it, but we don't have to talk about it.

The best thing about the church, the thing that is uniquely the church, is not programs or people but Jesus. If we as a people, and as congregations, don't get that right it doesn't matter how many programs we come up with.

In Christ through the Spirit, God has invited us into a deeply intimate and loving relationship with God and with each other. Being church is abiding in that love. We are God's beloved people gathered around word and sacraments. That's what gives us life. That's what shapes us. That's what sends us out into the world to do justice and to love kindness (Micah 6:8). And this must be the kind of community to which we invite others—not because we want to grow or pay for the boiler or attract young people, but because we have received this incredible life-changing gift and want everyone to be touched and claimed and transformed by it too. □

**Maybe Jesus has become like wallpaper: we know it's there and everyone can see it, but we don't have to talk about it.**

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

**St. Luke Lutheran Church**  
***Posting for Youth Ministries Coordinator***  
***Spring 2015***

St. Luke Lutheran Church (ELCA), a medium to large growing congregation located in north Spokane, Washington, is seeking a Youth Ministries Coordinator for its established, vibrant and relationship-driven ministry to 7-12 graders. This is an administrative position working with our College Leaders. It is a part-time position (20 hours per week) with benefits, salary DOE. View the detailed job description at [www.sllcspokane.org](http://www.sllcspokane.org). Looking to fill the position by July 1, 2015. Send the following information by May 31, 2015 to St. Luke Lutheran Church, ATTN: Admin, PO Box 28948, Spokane, WA 99228-8948 or to [sllcyouth2015@gmail.com](mailto:sllcyouth2015@gmail.com): Letter of Interest, Resume (include 3 references), Faith Statement, & one Letter of Recommendation. Job description available upon request.

***June 5-7: Women's Retreat***

This amazing retreat includes worship, great food, relaxation, spa time, and sessions with Dr. Julia Fogg, who will lead us in our theme, "Paul and Communities: The Spirit Builds Community in the Body of Christ." Dr. Fogg is Associate Professor of the New Testament and early Christianity, and chair of the Religion Department at California Lutheran University. Cost is \$113 per person for women 18 years of age and older. CEU credits available through NRIT.

Faith Lutheran Church and School, Redmond, WA, is seeking a full time church musician with experience and interest in leading and building a robust church music program in these areas:

- Chancel choir
- Bell choir (5 ranks of bells)
- Informal worship band
- Traditional worship organist (Pasi 2-m tracker)
- Desire to develop a children's music program in cooperation with elementary school
- Desire to develop lay music participation in choral and instrumental participation through choral music (all ages)

We are looking for an energetic self-starter who is eager to be part of a renewing congregation in a vital, growing area of suburban Seattle. Position is available starting July 1, 2015.

Salary negotiable based on qualifications and experience.

Send resumes to: Church musician search team  
 Faith Lutheran Church and School  
 9041 166th Avenue NE  
 Redmond, WA 98052

Or by email to: [musicsearch@faithluth.org](mailto:musicsearch@faithluth.org) No phone calls please.

Faith Lutheran Church and School is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate in employment practices or client services on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, religion, or disability.

# Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

101 West 22nd Street, Ste. 206  
Lombard, IL 60148



Phone: 630-627-0507  
Email: [admin@LMPeaceCenter.org](mailto:admin@LMPeaceCenter.org)  
Website: [www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org)  
Fax: 630-627-0519



We suspect you've been busy the past couple of weeks, so we've extended the pre-registration deadline for the *Healthy Congregations* workshop coming up on May 1-2, 2015, in Beaverton, Oregon. The new pre-registration deadline is April 22, extending savings for both individuals and groups. (Yes, you can still use the [Church Discount Coupon!](#))

*Healthy Congregations Workshop*  
May 1-2, 2015 ~ Beaverton, Oregon (Portland area)

**And, don't forget**  
**Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders**  
October 5-9, 2015 ~ Portland, Oregon

## Healthy Congregations Workshop ~ May 1-2, 2015

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church**  
**Beaverton, Oregon**  
*(Portland area)*



This workshop will help church leaders learn to keep anxiety in a conflictive situation from becoming infectious, gain confidence in responding to challenges and opportunities, and learn to focus on strengths, resources, options, and the future.

The workshop can be most effective when a group of clergy and lay leaders from the same congregation attend together, enhancing the ability to implement the learnings in their own congregation. Working together, such leaders can help the church system become more healthy by putting limits on invasive, destructive behaviors.

[Link to brochure](#)  
[Link to Church Discount Coupon](#)  
[Register Online](#)

## Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders (MSTI)

October 5-9, 2015  
Gethsemane Lutheran Church  
Portland, OR

### Quick Links to web pages:

- [MSTI](#)
- [Healthy Congregations](#)
- [Clergy Clinic](#)
- [Workshops](#)

### Quick Links for brochures & registration forms:

- [MSTI](#)
- [Healthy Congregations workshop brochure](#)
- [Church Discount Coupon for Healthy Congregations workshop](#)
- [Clergy Clinic](#)



# Join us on Facebook!

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

Are you interested in contracting with LMPC to lead a workshop or a Mediation Skills Training Institute? [Here's How](#)

### MSTI dates in 2015:

May 11-15  
Pittsburgh

August 3-7  
Glen Ellyn, IL  
(Chicago area)

October 5-9  
Portland, OR

November 16-20  
Columbia, SC

You can now register for our events online! Follow [this link](#).

[Like us on Facebook](#)

MSTI provides 32 hours of training, which is useful for judicatory leaders, clergy, pastors in transitional/interim ministry and lay leaders - anyone who works with people! This event serves as a continuing education opportunity, as well as for honing mediation and conflict transformation skills.

[Click here](#) for a brochure with further information and registration form.  
[Register online](#)

## Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process

Here are the dates for the 2015-2016 *Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process*:

Group A	Group B
October 26-28, 2015	November 9-11, 2015
February 15-17, 2016	February 22-24, 2016
April 18-20, 2016	May 2-4, 2016

[Download](#) a brochure with further information for both Groups A & B, and a registration form.  
[Register online](#) for Group A  
[Register online](#) for Group B

The staff at the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center wish you a very blessed and joyful Easter season.

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center | (630) 627-0507 | [peace@lmpeacecenter.org](mailto:peace@lmpeacecenter.org) | <http://www.lmpeacecenter.org>  
101 W. 22nd Street, Suite 206  
Lombard, IL 60148

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## ***ELCA AWARDS TWELVE ROSSING PHYSICS SCHOLARSHIPS***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has awarded Rossing Physics Scholarships to 12 ELCA college and university students. The scholarships are made possible through gifts from Dr. Thomas D. Rossing, who created the fund through the ELCA Foundation. There are 26 ELCA colleges and universities.

Five students received Rossing Physics Scholars awards in the amount of \$10,000 each. The students are: Mikaela Algren from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota; Fekireselassie Gebar Beyene from Augsburg College in Minneapolis; Jesse Hitz Graff from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa; Cain Valtierrez from Augsburg College; and Daniel Hickox-Young from St. Olaf in Northfield, Minnesota.

Seven students received Rossing Physics Scholars Honorable Mention awards in the amount of \$5,000 each. The students are: Andris Bibelnieks from Augsburg College; Caleb Clever from Muhlenburg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania; Michael Da Silva from California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, California; Jordan Dull from St. Olaf College; Grace Kerber from Gustavus Adolphus; Think Truong from Lenoir Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina; and Emily Witt from St. Olaf College.

“The Rossing Physics Scholarship program is a gem in ELCA higher education,” said the Rev. Mark Wilhelm, ELCA program director for schools. “Tom Rossing’s gift that established the program has made it possible to honor the sterling work done by talented physics students at our colleges and universities.” “The impact of a student receiving a Rossing Scholarship is twofold,” said Steven H. Mellema, professor and physics department chair at Gustavus Adolphus College. “The first is the obvious financial relief it provides to the student in this era of rising tuition costs at private colleges. But the other benefit of receiving the award is the recognition and encouragement that it gives these young people and the way it validates their hard work in the classrooms and the research labs. The Rossing awards tell them, and all of their classmates, that the physics program and the work they are doing here is of national stature. That recognition is part of the encouragement it takes to keep our students engaged in the hard work it takes to succeed in one of the most difficult majors in college.”

Rossing said he established the scholarship after “noting the need for men and women educated in science and especially in physics. This became especially obvious to me when I served as national president of the American Association of Physics Teachers. Not only are physicists badly needed in our modern economy, but the study of physics has led many women and men to successful careers in a variety of fields, including medicine, engineering, government, philosophy and the ministry,” he said.

Rossing began his academic career as a professor at St. Olaf College, where he became chair of the physics department, and later continued at Northern Illinois University. Now retired, he continues to teach part-time at Stanford University.

“We are not only honored to have our students receive these awards, but grateful that the Rossing Fund is helping us to retain these fine student majors and reward their successes. In that sense the ELCA is truly partnering with us to maintain a strong and vibrant program,” said Mellema.

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## ***Parochial Reports***

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

## **Mission Intent Forms**

*Were mailed on January 12*

***Have you sent yours in?***

... 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](mailto:office@ewaidsynod.org)

## ***There's Still Time! But Not Much.***

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 save our synod over \$19,000**

*The deadline is April 30th to receive Wellness Dollars and get us to the 65% participation level*





# 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 . . .*



Carolyn Payne (St. Marks - Spokane) on the death of her sister, Virginia Swan.  
 Rev. Scott Jurgens (Clarkston, WA) and family, on the death of his wife, Cheyl Jurgens.  
 For congregations and pastors in call process.  
 For those who suffer loss, may they find hope.  
 For families that are torn, may they be mended.  
 For those facing the struggles of aging, may they find new joy.  
 For those with medical concerns, may they find comfort and healing.  
 For those struggling to make sense of their world, may they find peace.  
 For those trying to make the world a better place, may their work be fruitful, and appreciated.  
 For retiring pastors, may their body of work be appreciated, and their retirement be as fruitful.  
 Please let us realize that we should make peace with the past, there is no way to change it.

*Prayer Requests . . .* to be included or removed from the Synod Prayer Request list, please send your request to the synod [office@ewaidssynod.org](mailto:office@ewaidssynod.org), or call 509-838-9871.

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## 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/>

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**EASTERN  
WASHINGTON  
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



May 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.ewaidsynod.org/synodpublications.html>.

*Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.*

Synod Calendar

**April 2015**

- 24 Synod Council Meeting - Pasco, WA
- 24-26 2015 Synod Assembly - Pasco, WA
- 24-26 2015 Synod Youth Assembly - Pasco, WA
- 27 Synod Office Closed

**May 2015**

- 2 Mission Interpreter Training - Moses Lake
- 3 Bloomsday - Spokane, WA
- 10 Mothers' Day
- 15-16 Candidacy - Spokane, WA
- 23 PLU Graduation
- 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
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- Net-Worker ..... Kristin Koskella
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# THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

EDITOR: CYNTHIA WOOLEVER—WWW.THEPARISHPAPER.COM

May 2015—Volume 23, Number 5

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## SEEKING A BIVOCATIONAL CALLING FOR PASTORS AND CHURCHES

Jim tells his neighbor about their church's bivocational pastor: "He preaches at our church at 9:00 on Sunday mornings, works in the church office two days a week, and does some visiting with sick members. On Sundays, he also drives eight miles up the road to another church and preaches there at 11:00. He sets up in their church office two days a week too. Then, he is the hospital chaplain one or two days a week." Jim's neighbor is speechless. He wonders when the pastor finds time for anything else.

Many churches need different kinds of leaders and models of ministry to remain workable and effective. The example of the Apostle Paul, who made tents to fund his ministry, inspired multitudes. Now the current demand for bivocational pastors (modern tentmakers) far exceeds the supply.

### What Is a Bivocational Pastor?

The majority of pastors serve one congregation. The church fully funds the pastor's salary and other compensation benefits, such as health insurance, housing, and retirement. A growing percentage of pastors serve multiple parishes, meaning that several churches fully fund the pastor's salary. However, these multipoint ministry assignments are not the usual arrangement for Protestant pastors—only about 12 percent of mainline and 6 percent of conservative Protestant leaders serve more than one church.<sup>1</sup>

Bivocational ministry is different from serving multiple parishes. The pastor holds a dual role—he or she serves in a local church ministry position (or in multiple churches) *and* meets other significant non-church work obligations. Most often, these pastors receive salary and support from other employment—such as chaplaincy, teacher or professor at a religious school, or serving in a community services non-profit organization. More than half of bivocational ministers fit this description. However, many pastors would describe the "other" part of their vocation in unique ways—like farming, a legal professional, IT specialist, or sports coach. Most bivo-

ational pastors reject the label of "part-time pastor" because they see their pastoral calling as full-time.

Bivocational ministry is more common among conservative Protestant pastors—about one in four work as tentmakers. Only about 6 percent of mainline Protestant pastors are bivocational and rarely are Catholic priests bivocational (1 percent). On average, bivocational ministers spend 20 hours per week in their non-church role. Pastors of small congregations devote closer to 30 hours per week to other employment, compared to about 9 hours a week for large-church bivocational pastors.

**The benefits for the pastor.** Many bivocational pastors find opportunities for ministry that they would not be able to pursue otherwise. These pastors find places to serve where they feel a special calling (new church development, a small or urban church, a diverse multicultural community) but where fully funded ministry is not available. Their non-church employment puts these pastors squarely out in the community—outside of any holy huddle<sup>2</sup>—where cross-pollination is more likely



"WE'RE HOPING TO HIRE A BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR WHO IS ALSO A PLUMBER, ELECTRICIAN, OR PASTRY CHEF."

to happen. Tentmakers are often geographically bound because of their non-church employment, boosting the likelihood of commitment to the local community.

**The downside for the pastor.** The myth that bivocational ministry is a second-rate ministry persists. This myth may prevent some of the most creative and entrepreneurial leaders from seeking out what seems like a riskier path. Research confirms high levels of ministry satisfaction among tentmakers, but they are too often undercompensated and provided few or no job benefits, which keeps them and their families on the financial edge. Other issues include long commutes, exhaustion, few or no days off, and limited chances for continuing education.

### How Do Congregations Respond?

Only when the congregation embraces their bivocational pastor's dual roles and sees that dual calling as fundamental to their own ministry vision are they bivocational too. One definition, from "The Bivocational Congregation," states that when local churches welcome bivocational ministry they operate on two callings: "the calling of function and the calling of mission." The authors go on to describe how churches live out this calling in five distinct ways.<sup>3</sup>

**We've always been a bivocational church.** This type often occurs in small towns or rural areas where the congregation has never had a full-time pastor. Because members carry out most roles and part-time pastors come and go, they have limited pastoral expectations.

**We seek to be a missional, bivocational church.** This second type exhibits a greater degree of intentionality to serve their local community. They want a pastor to be an equal companion in their understanding of what it means to be the church. Their church health and viability depend on their ministry outreach.

**We are a transitional bivocational church.** In this model, typically one church invites another congregation to share its building (sometimes called a nested congregation). The long-term outcome of the arrangement is unplanned and uncertain. In the meantime, both congregations benefit from the dual mission of support for one another.

**We are an experimental bivocational church.** Two or more worshiping communities form a cluster to carry out their respective ministries. Together they call a full-time pastor, but each church experiences the leadership arrangement as a part-time clergy role for their site. Over time, they may develop collaborative Christian Education, music, or social activities.

**"We want out" bivocational church.** In this situation, church leaders unhappily accept a part-time pastor, but their real yearning is for a full-time pastoral leader as soon as possible. Organizationally, the congregation functions as a church with a part-time pastor, but never as a bivocational congregation with a unique mission. In the end, they draw from endowments or other funds to call a full-time pastor. Rarely does exhausting all resources in the full-time clergy pursuit lead to long-term viability.

### What Does This Mean for the Congregation?

Whether a congregation has always been bivocational or is just beginning to experiment with it, there are pros and cons for all involved.

**The benefits for the congregation.** The most obvious one is a decreased financial burden for staff expenses. Healthy congregations direct these budget savings toward other priorities and find joy in supporting ministry outside the congregation's walls. For financially struggling churches, they see a part-time pastor as their only alternative to no pastor at all.

**The downside for the congregation.** Most members experience transitioning away from full-time clergy leadership to a part-time pastor as a loss, triggering a loss of identity and self-esteem. Instead of highlighting the congregation's gifts and strengths, members may only describe to potential candidates what they have lost and what is not working. Their lack of church self-esteem may keep them from attracting creative and talented pastors. Instead, they may settle for whoever is willing and available immediately.

### The Bottom Line

What makes a congregation thrive today and into the future? Bivocational churches and pastors face the same temptations as other congregations—the strong pull back to old systems and habits. Yet bivocational churches and pastors possess positive qualities that give them the flexibility to experiment, adapt, and respond quickly to new opportunities. They have all that they need to respond to what God is calling them to do.

1. Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Leadership That Fits Your Church* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice: 2012), 16.

2. Thom Rainer, "Eight Reasons Why Some Full-time Pastors and Staff Should Go Bivocational," <http://thomrainer.com/2015/01/19/eight-reasons-fulltime-pastors-staff-go-bivocational/>.

3. A. Pappas, N. Faramelli, and E. Pease, "The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow's Church?" *Congregations* (Alban Institute: 2009), Winter, Vol. 35, no. 1.