



Moments for Mission

Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.

January 2015

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

Not a War on Christmas, but on What Jesus Taught

The Rev. Kim Latterell, Bishop's Associate

Appeared in Puyallup Herald, December 2014



It's been surprisingly quiet this year regarding the annual cry of an ongoing war against Christmas. Voices have often claimed that those who press against nativity scenes on public ground, who greet others with a holiday wish instead of a merry Christmas, who grow strident against the ever-

present serenade of both the banal and the sacred music of the season, are nothing less than henchmen of the devil intent on destroying Christmas, Christianity and the American way of life. Perhaps this year there was less need for their war cry to raise political funds.

I give them credit however for being close to accurate in this way. From my own faith perspective, I see the real war as one being fought all year long against the grown-up Christ of biblical witness. It's not the Babe of Bethlehem who is being assaulted as much as the Christ King of the Cross who seeks out and serves the poor, the hungry, the single parent, the immigrant and refugee, the diseased and discarded, the profiled and punished of his time (and ours.) Our national tradition of trees and decorations, displays and dioramas, and greetings almost as meaningless as a typical 'hi, how are you?' really do very little to convey the depth and power of a birth story that puts the God of the universe into both the womb of an unmarried and nearly discarded teenager and an animal feedbox in a tiny little community too busy to notice or much care.

The real war is being fought against much of what Jesus taught, did, lived and died for, a war constantly and consistently being waged from a whole segment of elected leaders. Proposals for draconian measures against children refugees and their families, unjust laws that perpetually allow for unpaid and underpaid workers, the building of fences between neighboring nations, the unending fight against women's rights and safety, the denial of dramatic and destructive

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War on Christmas, continued from page 1

climate change, the idolatrous love of vengeance, violence and the weaponry that fuels such responses, the unwillingness to welcome and work for the good of all regardless of color or class or creed or identity: these are the real battles striking out against a compassionate Christ who comes to seek and save, to hold and heal, to embrace all the world into the arms of God. These are the real battles intent on tipping over the cradle and burning down the cross.

Frederick Buechner, *The Hungering Dark*, offers these words on the significance of Jesus' birth:

Whether there were ten million angels there that night or just the young woman and her husband, when that Child was born the whole course of history was changed. That is a fact as hard and blunt as any fact. It is impossible to conceive of how differently world history would have developed if that Child had not been born. For faith, the birth of that Child into the darkness of the world makes possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living life.

The true and lasting daily struggle for us all comes down to this: how will we seek to live out this new life in Christ, not for security or self-preservation or self-justification, but as a life lived for others in neighborly love and care...Jesus' way?

Congregations in transition

Lord, We pray for your wisdom and insight for the congregations in our synod who are now working through a time of pastoral transition, interviewing or extending a call to a new pastor:

Mobility- January 2015

Call process	Position	Status	Pastoral care
Beautiful Savior, Vancouver	P	I	Michelle Manicke
Elim, Port Orchard	P	I	Pulpit Supply
Holy Trinity, Port Angeles	P	NV	Beth Orling
Messiah, Auburn	P	I	Ron Kempe
Peace, Puyallup	P	I	Linda Nou
Resurrection, Tacoma	P	TR	Richard Hermstad
Salishan Eastside Lutheran Mission	P	TR	Pulpit Supply

Mobility position key
P – Pastor
AP – Associate Pastor
AIM – Associate in Ministry
DM – Diaconal Minister
DC- Deaconess

Mobility status key:
NV – New Vacancy
TR – Transition
I – Interviewing
C – Calling

Calls Accepted

Keith Marshall has been called to serve **Hope, Enumclaw**. His ordination by Bishop Jaech will be Saturday, February 7, 2015 at 3pm at Christ, Lakewood. He will be installed at Hope, Enumclaw by Pastor Kim Latterell, Bishop's Associate, on Sunday, February 15th at 10am. All are welcome to attend either or both events. Rostered leaders please vest in red.

Installation

The original installation date for **Pastors Seth Novak and Stephanie McCarthy** in December, serving **Agnus Dei, Gig Harbor**, was postponed due to the sudden death of Pastor McCarthy's grandmother.

ELCA Global Mission

Central America: Drought causes concerns for food security and livelihoods

By Megan Brandsrud



(Pictured: Bernardo Anastasio Hernández, a cattle farmer, stands on the dry river bed of the Río Grande at San Francisco Libre in Nicaragua. Drought is affecting large areas of Central America, where hundreds of cattle are dying, wells are drying up and the harvests have failed. Credit: ACT Alliance/Sean Hawkey)

recorded as the region's worst dry period in the last 30 years. The drought has impacted more than 2.5 million people across the region. Three countries that are feeling deep impacts of this drought include El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, where crops are either completely depleted or prices for grains have increased so significantly that many families cannot afford to purchase them. The drought is causing concerns for food security and livelihoods.

Lutheran Disaster Response, working with Lutheran World Federation, is assisting in early recovery and livelihood restoration through the installation of family gardens, farm plots, micro-irrigation systems and training workshops.

Family gardens: Family garden plots will be installed to assist 450 families in El Salvador, 100 families in Honduras and 200 families in Nicaragua. The garden plots will be used in areas where yield is ensured so families have access to food without having to worry about high costs.

Farm plots: In Honduras and Nicaragua, farm plots will be implemented in areas for corn and bean production. Short-cycle (native) varieties will be used to ensure yield during the short rainy season without having to worry about long-term water shortage difficulties.

Micro-irrigation systems: Water supply systems will be established to support family gardens and farm plots in Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. A total of 120 micro-irrigation systems will be installed in priority areas.

Training workshops: In order to establish the projects listed above, training workshops will be provided to ensure the success of the family gardens, farm plots and water management systems.

We will continue to walk with and pray for our brothers and sisters in Central America as they work through the difficulties caused by the drought. If you would like to support Lutheran Disaster Response's work in Central America, please visit the [Lutheran Disaster Response giving page](#).

Come Take Part in our Companion Synod

The Southwestern Washington Synod has a companion relationship with Lutheran synods in Namibia. Our synod's Namibia Task Force is planning visits there, as well as hosting a Namibian clergy member in 2015. The Namibia Task Force would love you to be a part of the effort. Members of the task force can come to present to your congregation. Contact Chairman Rachel Pritchett @rachelpritchett@msn.com or [206-498-0920](tel:206-498-0920).

Namibia Nine Visit Coming

On Saturday, Feb. 29, seven of the nine "Namibia 9" students will attend a premiere screening PLU has produced of their amazing experience here. You are invited to attend, starting with a reception at 5:30 p.m. and the film at 6:30 p.m., all at the Karen Hille Philips Center for Performing Arts on the campus of PLU in Tacoma.

The students will lead a panel discussion after the film about the impact education had on them and what it means for their democracy today. Student filmmakers Princess Reese and Andrea Capere will also be present for a question-and-answer session about the making of the film. Admission to the event is open to all. *Namibia Nine* is sponsored by the Wang Center for Global Education at Pacific Lutheran University. The project is supervised by Professor Joanne M. Lisosky, Ph.D., and Melannie Denise Cunningham, M.B.A. and Director of Multicultural Recruitment at PLU.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, two dozen congregations in the Southwestern Washington Synod helped raised funds to bring the 9 students from Namibia to PLU to receive their education. They returned to become leaders of a newly independent Namibia. Don't miss this special evening. Questions? Rachel Pritchett at rachelpritchett@msn.com.

Hunger ministries

ELCA Hunger Packet

By Diane Armbrust, member of the Synod Hunger Committee

The season of Lent will be upon us before we know it. Ash Wednesday is February 18 this year. What will your congregation be doing to grow in the spiritual disciplines of the season?

Each year the ELCA World Hunger program mails a *Hunger Packet* in January that is filled with resources to help plan activities that lead your congregation deeper into the seasons that fall in the first half of the church year.

Included in this year's packet you will find:

- ***An Action Guide for Congregations*** (40 ideas/resources to activate congregations)

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Hunger packet resources continued

- ***Walk for Water*** brochure (introduction to ELCA World Hunger's initiative for the Youth Gathering)
- A new ELCA World Hunger brochure
- A Hunger/Health brochure – highlighting the work of ELCA World Hunger
- A set of reproducible stories
- ***God's Global Barnard/ELCA Good Gifts*** coloring book

When it comes, don't stack it in the *to-do* file that is your desk, or the round file on the floor. Open it up! There are resources for every age level, and many ministries. Share the resources with the appropriate congregational leaders, and encourage them to use them to highlight the important justice ministries of our church. Hunger resources are free to ELCA congregations, and can be ordered directly from the resource page. Many are also downloadable as pdf files.

Looking for something more? Go to <http://www.elca.org/hunger/resources>. There, you will find a plethora of materials under the following headings: General; Hunger Education; Stories and Videos; Lent and Easter; Toolkits. Spend a few minutes perusing them. You are sure to find something to fit your congregations' needs. Need help? Call the Synod Office at 253-535-8300 or swsynod@plu.edu and ask to be put in touch with a member of the Synod Hunger Committee.

Bishop's Convocation for Rostered Leaders



Bishop Jaech invites all rostered leaders in the Southwestern Washington Synod to the 2015 Bishop's Convocation for rostered leaders. Theme: "A User's Guide to Power: How Pastors and AIMS can use their Power Well in a Church Setting" with Julie Diamond Ph.D.

The Prayer Retreat that precedes it will be "Resting in God: Exploring Meditation" with Satya Jaech, MA. Both events held at Seabeck Conference Center.

www.regonline.com/2015BishopsConvo

Lutherwood Now Accepting Summer 2015 Staff Applications

Lutherwood, in Bellingham, WA, needs your help to find new staff members for summer 2015 - especially as we continue to grow to minister to more campers and with more congregations! We are looking to hire 45 staff members, ten more than summer 2014. Please forward this on or talk to the young adults you know. We are looking for Christ-centered, hard-working, young adults who know how to have fun and be silly, but can also be serious when the time calls for it. For positions, job descriptions and pay scale, please [visit their website](#).

If you'd like to submit an article, idea for a story or congregational photo for the synod newsletter, please email to Allison Ramsey, newsletter editor at swwsynod@plu.edu. Submission of photos and articles assumes permission to print.

Hospitality

Compiled by Bob and Kathy Mattson, members at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Tacoma

Worship participants at our 2014 Synod Assembly were invited to share their stories of hospitality. Bishop Jaech identified two kinds of hospitality: home hospitality and road hospitality. Home hospitality is how we prepare and welcome people into our homes and congregations; includes efforts to help people feel comfortable and appreciated. Road hospitality is how we welcome folks while we are living our vocation in the world. Road hospitality includes efforts to engage our neighbors, both planned and unplanned, as we welcome strangers as Christ in our midst. Hundreds of stories were shared- some will be included each month in the synod newsletter.

From: Pastor Sigi Helgeson of Family of God Lutheran, Bremerton:

"40 Days of Community" began an intentional outreach to our neighborhood and community, which began with a visit to our neighbors, an invitation to participate in worship, included a community project to help clean up a park and ended with a harvest carnival to celebrate Reformation Sunday!



From: Pastor Lori Bonkoski, Christ the King Lutheran, Sumner :

When people came we give a gift bag with goodies-tea bags, candy, popcorn, a cross for their pocket, devotionals, etc. Bags are hand painted so it feels like a gift. We are blessed by their presence, so we bless them.

From: Monica Hurley, Creator Lutheran Church, Bonney Lake:

- 1) Our youth chose to bring a relevancy to the congregation sharing God through technology. Just as Martin Luther put bar songs to Christian words, they invited congregation members to take "selfies" at church and post to their Instagram and Facebook pages as a way to be a Christian witness.



- 2) Being with a family as they say good bye to their mom.



Showing students another kind of Christianity

The Rev. Elizabeth Rawlings, Pastor of Lutheran Campus Ministry, Univ. of Washington

She stood in front of our table at the entrance to the HUB (the Husky Union Building), suspicious of our offer of free coffee, cookies and love. After a few seconds of silent evaluation, she asked, "So, um, do I have to hear about how I am going to hell to get some free coffee?"

"No," I replied, "We're Lutheran. That's not how we roll."

She took some coffee and cookies and left. Then she came back after class and hung out with us. And came back the next week because she needed someone to talk to. Now every time we are in front of the HUB, she stops by to say hi. She is not the only one.

This is what we do at Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Washington: find new ways to love the people in our neighborhood and on campus and invite them into conversation and community. We meet them where they are with open ears, open hearts and full carafes of coffee, and it's all thanks to you.

This past quarter, we welcomed an average of 15 students to dinner and worship every week, and our numbers continue to grow. We have created new liturgy that is distinctly Lutheran yet approachable to students without a liturgical (or church) background, and welcomed students into our community through free weekly yoga classes. We have built relationships with Hillel (the Jewish student group on campus) and the Muslim Student Association and strengthened relationships with surrounding Lutheran communities. We sat in front of the HUB (Huskey Union Building), offering free coffee, treats and love to students, staff, faculty and anyone else happening by. We made sandwiches for abused women and children. We played, worshiped, learned, relaxed and loved one another.

Our ministry is supported by congregations and individual donors – this is *your* outreach to young adults, and it is an excellent way for you to help support young adults in the name of Jesus Christ. As you consider your annual giving, please consider [making a donation to Lutheran Campus Ministry](#) at the University of Washington. Our ministry is a vibrant, growing ministry to a community that is actively seeking God's love. Help us light their path.

Our Congregations (news and neat ideas from our synod congregations)

Community Support after Thieves Take Heavy Wooden Cross from Church

By Allison Ramsey

ELCA pastor, the Rev. Dan Wiktorek, serves Twin Harbors Lutheran Church part-time. He has recently also started serving South Beach Presbyterian Church, which is a nearby church in full communion partnership with the ELCA.

In early December, Keith Eldridge from KOMONews.com first reported that someone broke into South Beach Presbyterian Church and stole a couple of Christmas banners, a toaster and their 8-foot wooden cross that hangs above their altar. All other items of value were left behind. The cross is solid oak and walnut and is very heavy. This cross was securely attached to the wall above the altar.

This incident happened right as Pastor Wiktorek began serving South Beach Presbyterian Church. In this first sermon he told the congregation not to worry about what was missing, "because even without the cross being there we are all carrying a cross in our hearts."



Pastor Wiktorek says that another Presbyterian church in the area has contributed money to replace the window that was broken when the thieves entered the building.

On December 11th, the cross was found by the sheriff's department in brush south of the church. The damage to the cross is being repaired and it will now hang in a new spot in their building.

Meanwhile a volunteer woodworker, Anthony Robinson, who has a business in the Ocean Shores area called Native Beach Accessories, made a new creative and wonderful cross for South Beach Presbyterian, shown left. Everyone agrees it is wonderful and very appropriate for the church on the beach. Artist Robinson, says that this was "truly a wonderful demonstration of a community coming together" and is thankful for all the

wonderful people involved. A nice happy ending.

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St. Andrew, Vancouver has started a Friendship Ministry which assigns one person (a Friendship Minister) each Sunday who invites and welcomes guests into their church and learns a little bit about each one. This follows the idea that “each person who walks through the doors is made in the image of God and has gifts to offer the Church. God’s people at St. Andrew have been “poorer” for not having that person here and getting to know them helps us rectify the poverty we experienced from not knowing them.”

Associate in Ministry Marj Olason’s November Commissioning

Peninsula Lutheran, Gig Harbor called Marj Olason to serve as their Director of Visitation Ministries. At her commissioning and installation on November 16th, our rostered leaders came out to support her as shown in the photo below.



L to R, Front row: Ingelaurie Lisher, AIM (St. Mark’s by the Narrows, Tacoma), Marj Olason (Peninsula, Gig Harbor), Janet Grant, AIM (Chaplain, Providence St. Peter Hospital, Olympia); Back row: Rev. Dan Wilson (retired), Rev. Randy Olson (Chaplain, Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community), Rev. Jon Olson (Peninsula, Gig Harbor), Bishop Richard E. Jaech, Ron Coen, AIM (retired), Rev. Steve Ray (First, Tacoma).

Calendar

January 12-15, 2015- Byberg Preaching Conference, Cannon Beach, OR

January 13- Interim Pastor’s meeting 11am

January 14- Latino Ministry meeting 1pm

January 16- Namibia Task Force meeting 11am

January 17- Synod Council meeting

January 19- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day- Synod Office closed.

January 25-28 - Bishop’s Convocation and Prayer Retreat for Rostered Leaders, Seabeck. Conference Center

May 15-16 - Synod Assembly at the Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA. Registration opens late January 2015.

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