

# 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

December 2014

God's beloved People,

Welcome to the Advent Season and the beginning of our encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St Mark, the spare and urgent book that was used as the foundation for Luke and Matthew and their telling of the story. With St Mark we're down to the root of the matter!

I always look forward to the year of St Mark because of this book's sense of clean and persistent urgency and because of an understanding, now years old but still fresh, in "Binding the Strong Man," a commentary by Ched Myers. This has proven to be a durable and trustworthy commentary on St Mark and its end in Jesus.

"Its end in Jesus." That a curious way to put it, isn't it? The word "end" has played a complicated role in our proclamation for the past few weeks. We've proclaimed the apocalypse, the "end times," and "the end of time." There's a good deal of fear in this because of the judgment that the "end" implies.

But here's the word trick. The word "end" signifies summation and finality, and it also describes purpose, as in TS Eliot's great poem, the Four Quartets:

*"We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time."*

The "end" of Advent centers in all its fullness on the birth of Jesus, our Savior, the one who will become our Lord and in all his fullness, the Lord Christ, Savior of the world. So in a paradoxical way we have our beginning again in the end, and the end is Jesus, we begin again in Jesus.

Brothers and sisters: Seek this End and seek your own new beginning in the trustworthy story of the infant born to be Savior, Lord to us and for us. This is the finality in which we have Life!

Bishop Martin Wells



## *My appreciation for rural ministries* **A CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE**

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

Imagine the ideal Christmas Eve experience in church for a person who rarely attends. What if the experience was so wonderful that the person came away changed; filled with the love of God, joy and hope. We all need connection and to feel that we belong, and at Christmas we open our hearts and are emotionally ready for earthly beauty and relationships as well as the presence and power of things we cannot see. This is the time of year when we suspend our analytical minds and just take in the experience of Christmas. How can the church provide what people need? Here are some ideas:

Welcome and hospitality: A “shepherd” with an orange safety flashlight would direct people to an open parking space. A group of carolers would wander around the parking lot singing; dressed as angels.

Outside the church, greet people warmly, even if it is cold. Greeters inside the church can direct people so they know what to do/ where to go.

Once inside the church hot apple cider, coffee and cookies/ candy are immediately available and the smell of them will be enough to enjoy even if people say ‘no thank you’.

A small gift for each child would be given out by people dressed as elves; gifts to suit different ages.

Further inside would be at least two photographers ready to take photos of people dressed in their Christmas best. Someone else hands out a form for every family; names, address, email address, phone number. Keep track of who goes with which photo – since there should be visitors they don’t know. The following week the photo is delivered by the pastor or friendly volunteers (or mailed if they live too far). Before doing so be sure to note names and approximate ages of the children especially if they live in the area. A handwritten card with the photo would say how glad you were that they came.

A nearby table with flyers about the next sermon series, upcoming events, and brochures about the church and ministries, with someone to give out the information and to tell people about the church.

Members would be asked the Sunday before to please sit in the front pews so that visitors could have the “premium seats” in the back.

Members would also be coached to talk with visitors and given some instructions and sentences to use so they do not feel embarrassed if the “visitor” is an inactive member.

10 minutes sermon; not about Jesus but rather to experience God’s love in Christ through the pastor.

The music would be excellent but not “too much of a good thing”. Not every child can perform, and children are not that cute if you don’t know them; visitors generally don’t. One cute child is fine.

Young children are invited to robe up for an impromptu Christmas pageant with robes, crowns, sheep ears and other dress-up items and process down together for the children’s sermon.

Advertising via mailings, postcards and a signboard that tells the public what is happening/ offered.

Practice inviting people to Christmas Eve service a few weeks before and tell everyone in your church what will be part of the Christmas Eve experience so they know what to tell their friends and neighbors.



## 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	Blackfoot, ID – Emanuel Lutheran	B		
P	Boise, ID – Immanuel	NV		
P	Bonnars Ferry, ID – Trinity Lutheran	C	Kimberly Meinecke	I
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	NV	Betty Krafft	SP
P	Firth, ID – Bethel Lutheran	A		
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	Idaho Falls, ID – New Day Lutheran Community	A	Barbara Harrison-Condon	I
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	Pocatello, ID – Church of the Good Shepherd	B	Barbara Harrison-Condon	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	B		
P	Thayne, WY – Star Valley United Church	NV	Al Schoonover	SP
P	Terrace Heights, WA – Tree of Life	NV		
TM	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	A	Jillian Ross	TM

### Roster Changes

#### **Resignations**

Rev. Ladd Bjerneby has announced his resignation from Zion, Spokane Valley. His last Sunday was November 16.

#### **Retirements**

Rev. Neal Collins has announced his retirement. His last Sunday will be November 23.

#### **Installations**

Rev. Daniel Forsgren will be installed at Trinity Lutheran - Coeur d' Alene, ID Sunday, December 14, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.



**Join us on Facebook!**

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

# Presiding bishop

By Elizabeth A. Eaton

## Spruce up our spiritual house

Disciplines help us glorify God while serving in ways that are abundant, clear



MICHAEL D. WATSON

“I’m spiritual, not religious.” How many times have we heard that, usually from people who consider their unchurched status a mark of honor. When I heard this as a parish pastor, I became frustrated, especially when folks waxed lyrical about a spiritual experience engendered from contemplating the beauty of a mountaintop. This was perplexing because I served in Ohio.

There are no mountains. I was tempted to dismiss it as laziness. But now I think they are on to something.

This coincides with what I am thinking after a year in office. The four “emphases” or “strategic intents” or “things” I’ve identified—we are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together, we are church for the sake of the world—have resonance across the ELCA. It’s how I’m organizing my work.

A clear sense that worship is at the heart of what we do together and at the heart of our worship is the crucified and risen Christ—this is the essential foundation for our life and work together. Being clear about our confessional Lutheran identity facilitates our witness to the gospel and makes possible authentic ecumenical, interreligious and secular engagement. Being church together is a manifestation of the unity we have through baptism into the body of Christ. It is a source of strength. It is scriptural. Being church for the sake of the world is the natural extension of being church, Lutheran and church together. We get to participate in God’s renewing and reconciling work in the world God so loves.

I’m still developing these emphases, but the “we are church” is claiming my immediate attention.

We are *church*. We do many wonderful things as the church. We feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and visit the sick. Why do we do these things and how are we able to do them? As I have written before, we are not the American Cancer Society or a nongovernmental organization. Peter instructed us that “like living stones, let

yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5). We are *ekklesia*—an assembly called out from the world and to God.

There is nothing wrong with employing the best practices of the business world, but before the strategic planning, goal-setting and program implementation we need to be about tending our individual and corporate spiritual life. As a church we need to engage in basic spiritual practices: prayer, silence, corporate worship, Scripture study, giving, service. These are ways God comes to us. These disciplines create a space in us, an openness, for God’s Spirit. They chip away at our willfulness. They make us aware of God’s presence in our lives.

These spiritual practices aren’t magic or a kumbaya fad. They have been part of the Christian tradition for millennia. They are part of the Lutheran tradition. Martin Luther’s morning and evening prayers are precious models of spiritual practice (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 1166). Unfortunately, we’ve lost this part of our tradition. We’ve become religious, not spiritual. There is strong evidence that tending the spiritual life is what millennials are longing for. I think the rest of us are too.

**Unfortunately, we have lost this part of our tradition. We have become religious, not spiritual.**

However, the intention must be there also. We are such active, useful people. We are “distracted by (our) many tasks” (Luke 10:40).

We might mean to practice spiritual disciplines, but there is real work to do. Attending to God is our real work. Set aside the time. Mark it on the calendar. Then show up. Show up with our whole selves. Give God our complete attention. Practicing these disciplines is not about productivity—it’s about being fully and expectantly present to God. Spiritual life is not multitasking.

We might shy away from this whole business because it seems so inward focused and self-absorbed. It’s not. It’s the spiritual equivalent of putting our oxygen mask on first before assisting others. Practicing these disciplines is *so that* we can glorify God and serve in ways that are abundant and clear.

We have a rich tradition as Lutherans: theological rigor, liturgical worship, musical excellence. Engaging in spiritual practices doesn’t supplant any of this. It’s part of our life as church. We can be spiritual and religious. □

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

This column originally appeared in The Lutheran’s November 2014 issue. Reprinted with permission.

## Byberg Preaching Workshop | *Developing skills of ELCA preachers*

**January 12-14, 2015**

**Cannon Beach, Oregon**

**The Rev. Dr. Melinda Quivik**

**Preaching in Times of Transition** | How can preachers and other church leaders proclaim the gospel of the risen Christ in the midst of shifting points of view and contentious debates? How is the church to assess the circumstances and find the best words to bring comfort and to raise questions about the relationship between church and culture? We will explore these questions by looking at imagery of place and class, the relationship between context and theology, what it means to be church in a culture that has been paying less and less attention to matters of faith, and where hope is found.



**Registration, suggested reading and media archives** | Please download, print out and mail in the registration form found at [www.bybergpreaching.org](http://www.bybergpreaching.org). *This will be the only printed information you receive this year as we continue our transition to electronic communications.*



## ***Wartburg Theological Seminary Offers Two New Continuing Education Opportunities This Fall!***

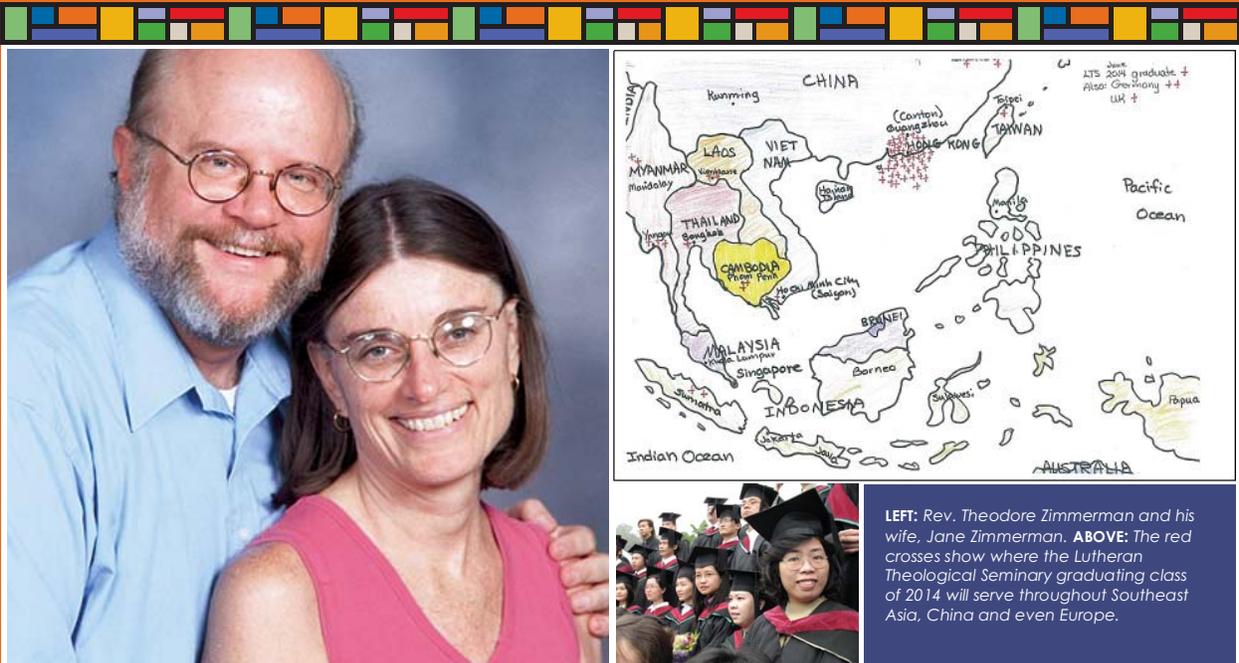
Wartburg Seminary is pleased to announce two new continuing education opportunities this fall for those wishing to learn more about the Bible or our Christian tradition. These resources are available to all learners, regardless of training or educational backgrounds. Sign up on your own or take either course with others from your congregation!

Church leaders are now serving throughout Southeast Asia, in China and even in Europe thanks to training they received from teachers at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, including ELCA missionary teachers such as the Zimmermans. For a colorful Word document to display on a bulletin board or use in a newsletter or PowerPoint presentation, visit [www.ELCA.org/resources/globalchurch](http://www.ELCA.org/resources/globalchurch).

# Mission of the Month

STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL CHURCH

2014 NO. 7



LEFT: Rev. Theodore Zimmerman and his wife, Jane Zimmerman. ABOVE: The red crosses show where the Lutheran Theological Seminary graduating class of 2014 will serve throughout Southeast Asia, China and even Europe.

## Nurturing the global church

**As the Rev. Theodore Zimmerman and his wife, Jane “Janey” Zimmerman, retire from service as ELCA missionaries teaching at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, they can look back and see that they’ve had a hand in the development of the global church.**

Over the years, they’ve helped train many pastors and church leaders. Most recently, their work with the class of 2014 added 60 graduates who will serve throughout Southeast Asia, in China and even in Europe.

And the church in Hong Kong has also benefited, of course. “Most of the over 50 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong pastors have graduated from LTS,” says Janey.

“It is important to add that 75 percent of the [seminary] graduates are not Lutheran,” she says. “Those students also will better serve their churches and hopefully will bring increased vitality and a stronger, deeper understanding of the Bible, theological issues and pastoral counseling. Some are called to hospital or prison chaplaincy and others receive advanced degrees and will teach at seminaries in China or Southeast Asia.”

It’s the generous donations of ELCA members that help support the training of these future leaders of the global church – support for which the Zimmermans are thankful.

“Thank you for your support over these years as we help prepare these students for leadership in the church in Asia and elsewhere!” Janey says. “Ted and I retire, but the needs continue around the world. Thank you for continuing to participate in God’s work in the world – our hands, God’s work.”

## Get involved!

*Your gifts to ELCA Global Church Sponsorship directly fund missionaries like the Rev. Ted Zimmerman and Jane Zimmerman as they work hand in hand with our neighbors around the world. Learn more or make a gift to support their work at [www.ELCA.org/globalchurch/donate](http://www.ELCA.org/globalchurch/donate).*

*Supporting ELCA missionaries is a priority of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA. Learn more at [www.ELCA.org/missionarysponsorship](http://www.ELCA.org/missionarysponsorship).*



**ELCA Global Church Sponsorship**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God’s work. Our hands.

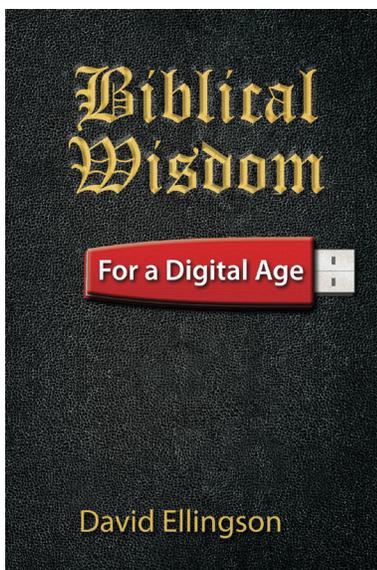
## AUGUSTA VICTORIA HOSPITAL: A REFUGE IN JERUSALEM

Augusta Victoria is a church-hospital complex located on the southern side of Mount Scopus beside Mount of Olives, Jerusalem. It was built in 1907 as a center for the German Protestant community in Ottoman Palestine. The complex, completed in 1910, included the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension with a 50-meter belltower and a hospice for Christian pilgrims.

Augusta Victoria is now the second-largest hospital in East Jerusalem, as well as being the sole remaining specialized-care hospital located in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. Augusta Victoria now functions as a 161-bed hospital surrounded by olive trees. The rectory of the pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer is also located on the site, along with administrative offices and living quarters of the Jerusalem offices of the Lutheran World Federation. It is primarily financed by the Lutheran World Federation and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The hospital also operates a guesthouse run by the Lutheran World Federation for international volunteers and guests. The hospital mission statement includes the provision of health care without regard to race, creed, gender, or national origin.

Augusta Victoria Hospital is the first and only hospital to provide radiation therapy for cancer patients in the Palestinian territories and is the only medical facility in the West Bank offering pediatric kidney dialysis. They have a mobile mamogram for screening outside of Jerusalem. A pediatric oncology ward for Palestinian children opened in April 2005 in a joint project with the Peres Center for Peace, various Italian foundations and the Hadassah University Hospital, which trained the oncologist and nursing staff. This hospital also takes care of patients who are refugees or in social need. On a daily basis, these and other specialty services touch countless lives, both young and old, from communities across the Palestinian territories.

Augusta Victoria is a program of The Lutheran World Federation and supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In August the ELCA provided \$100,000 in humanitarian assistance to help support the operation of the healthcare system in the midst of the recent violence in the Middle East. The funds were disbursed through Lutheran Disaster Response to The Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of 144 churches representing more than 72 million Christians in 79 countries. Thank you for your support of Lutheran Christians in the Holy Land.



### Biblical Wisdom for a Digital Age by the Rev. Dr. David Ellingson

is now available on Amazon. 50 Biblical "sound bytes" (passages) with key Christian themes, written short reflections, and learning "activities" for families, teens, and adults. Useful for personal/family devotions, classes, small groups and retreats. Ellingson is Professor of Children, Youth & Family Studies and Director of the Children, Youth & Family Center at Trinity Lutheran College in Everett.

Email: [david.ellingson@tlc.edu](mailto:david.ellingson@tlc.edu)

## ***Continuing Education Opportunity!***

Every year in late winter, clergy and lay people from across the country ascend the Rocky Mountains of Colorado for a week of continuing education, spiritual renewal, and winter play:

### **Theoprobe 2015**

*Winter Park, Colorado February 7-13, 2015*

***Presenters:***

Terri Martinson Elton, PhD  
Leading in the Midst of Change

Reed Carlson, PhD Candidate  
The Prince of Persia: Five Studies in the Book of Daniel

For more information go to: <http://www.theoprobe.com/>

Pastor Phil Misner  
Cell (call/text) -- 509-288-1862

Peace Lutheran Church, Colfax -- 509-397-2121  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Endicott -- 509-657-3329

**Certificate Program in Children, Youth & Family Ministry  
January 5-23, 2015  
Trinity Lutheran College, Everett, WA**



Trinity Lutheran College will offer a three-week Certificate Program in Children, Youth & Family Ministry, January 5-23, 2015. The program is designed to equip church staff, volunteers, and pastors for effective leadership in congregational children, youth, and family ministry. It is a terrific opportunity for professional development or those who want to become more involved in **children's and youth ministry**.

Students learn from a faculty in an interactive seminar format, including class discussions, presentations, conversations about readings, videos, role plays, and more. Topics include biblical and theological foundations for faith formation, Bible study methods, human lifespan development (birth through end-of-life), pastoral care skills, and program administration, as well as creative programming for service projects, Confirmation, intergenerational ministry, managing volunteers, spiritual formation, and more.

For additional information about training content, costs, housing options, and registration, visit [www.tlc.edu/cyfccenter](http://www.tlc.edu/cyfccenter) or contact Rev. David Ellingson at 425.249.4722 or [david.ellingson@tlc.edu](mailto:david.ellingson@tlc.edu).

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## COCOA OF EXCELLENCE

In Managua, Nicaragua, the Cocoa of Excellence Programme offers farmers an initiative to reward excellence in producing high-quality cocoa and provide and increase access to the International Cocoa Awards. Recently there was a competition to evaluate cocoa samples submitted by local producers. Award-winning farmers and producers will have the opportunity to participate in the 2015 International Cocoa Awards – the only competition of its kind to connect international cocoa growers and chocolate makers.

The Cocoa of Excellence Programme competition serves to connect all links of the cocoa supply chain, and stimulates the capacity for growth among cocoa-producing countries, including Nicaragua. Judges include an International Committee of globally renowned cocoa experts, who donate their time to help process and evaluate cocoa samples for the national competition and select winners to proceed to the International Cocoa Awards to be held next year. Judges will also train local cocoa producers and cooperatives in processing and evaluating cocoa samples as part of the week's agenda.

“This competition is an excellent platform to raise awareness among cocoa producers and buyers of the full spectrum of cocoa flavors and quality,” said Kristen Hard, founder of Atlanta Chocolates, international cocoa industry trend leader and a Cocoa of Excellence Programme judge. “Process and technique in producing high quality cocoa is critical, and this competition exposes local farmers to opportunities to innovate their own methods of production.”

Lutheran World Relief also supported this year's competition in Nicaragua. Cocoa of Excellence Programme and Lutheran World Relief partnered on this opportunity in order to connect local producers to these initiatives to spur growth in the region and position Nicaragua as a player in the global cocoa market.

“Lutheran World Relief works with these cocoa farmers throughout the year to share the latest techniques, resources and educational tools for success in the cocoa industry, but also in daily life,” said Jenny Wiegel, Regional Representative for Central America and Haiti, Lutheran World Relief. “Cocoa of Excellence is a critical resource for these farmers to increase visibility of their products on a national and international stage, and expose them to additional learning opportunities in order to compete with the highest quality cocoa in the world. We plan to continue partnering with the Cocoa of Excellence Programme to regularize these national cocoa quality competitions in Nicaragua, as well as Honduras, El Salvador and Haiti, where we also have a field presence working with cocoa cooperatives.”

Samples submitted to Cocoa of Excellence, Nicaragua 2014, undergo a sensory evaluation conducted by the International Committee of judges. The best 3 samples are sent to the International Cocoa Awards to compete with samples from around the world. Winners of this competition will be announced at the Salon du Chocolat in Paris in 2015.

Thank you for your Mission Dollars which provide support to Lutheran World Relief to assist farmers in the developing world.

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## FINDING A FUTURE WITH HOPE

by Jo Ann Dollard

Renee Splichal Larson, pastor of Heart River Lutheran Church in Mandan, N.D., says of her congregation, “We're different. Our youngest member is 10 months old and the oldest is 92. And half of us are incarcerated.”

Located in the center of the campus of the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center is a small ecumenical house of worship – appropriately named Hope Chapel – which houses Heart River Lutheran Church. Every Sunday, about 90 people worship in the 60-member congregation, many of them kids from the correctional center. This one-of-a-kind ELCA congregation serves both the community of Mandan and the youth at the correctional center. Incorporated in 1984, members of Heart River have worshiped with these youth as they come and go for 30 years.

Renee serves the congregation along with Shera Nesheim, a diaconal minister who joined her in 2011, a year after she started, to help develop Bridges of Hope, a faith-based re-entry mentoring and faith formation program for youth leaving the

*(Continued on page 11)*

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## Meet the Net-Workers



Jim Peterson

Born and raised on a family owned wheat, barley, and cattle ranch, 30 miles west of Spokane. I graduated from Reardan High School. I attended WSU where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Agronomy and a Masters in Agricultural Economics. I have been employed at Walla Walla Community College since 1972. Although I have had a single employer for 42 years I have had many jobs, from instructor of agriculture and economics to Vice President of Administrative Services and many others in between. I have been involved in the community in such organizations as the Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blue Mountain Land Trust, YWCA, Exchange Club and Church Council, Sunday School teacher, and Vacation Bible School teacher at Christ Lutheran Church.

In my spare time I like to garden, fly fish, and work in the wood shop.



Rev. David Kappus

David Kappus is excited to be a part of this new adventure in the EWA-ID Synod! He serves Central Lutheran Church in Spokane as their pastor and has gotten to know many of the people and areas around Spokane in the last decade. Dave was ordained in Western North Dakota in 1990 and has spent half of his pastoral ministry in rural communities.

David Kappus is a pastor, actor, musician, motorcyclist, avid reader, and animal lover. You may have seen him (or heard his drumming) on (or behind) several area stages. He lives in the Spokane Valley with his wife, Theresa, and their pets Stella and Rory (the dogs) and Hermione and Pumpkin (the cats). Dave and Theresa were married in 1995 and despite the dire predictions that a marriage between a pastor and librarian would be "categorically dull", they have persevered to make it quite interesting indeed!



Kristin Koskella

I live with my husband, Floyd; a standard schnauzer, Lucca; and an aging greyhound, Lulu. We have 5 grown children and are blessed with three grandsons. I grew up in rural Idaho on Ranger Stations and in small towns. As an adult I moved to the Upper East Side of Manhattan and worked at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for a number of years before returning West. We moved to Seattle, WA where I worked in health care, returning to Idaho in 2005. Currently, I am the Ministry Coordinator at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran in Boise. I look forward to seeing how God is going to fulfill the promise in Jeremiah 29:11 through this new venture. I enjoy efficiency and understand teamwork is a critical part of operating smoothly. I had the pleasure of being a member of the Dome Creative Team for the youth gathering in New Orleans and witnessed firsthand the abundance of our God. I am thrilled with the opportunity to work as the So. Idaho Networker. It will be a pleasure to meet new people and work together to strengthen and expand our faith.



Linda Howell

A country kid at heart, I grew up in the dairy farming community of Duvall, Washington. In 1980 I received a Bachelor of Arts in Recreation and Park Administration from Washington State University. I made many life-long friends and connections during my time as a student in Pullman - including meeting my husband Wesley Howell. Wes is a Lutheran pastor, currently serving at Trinity in Pullman. We have three young adult children, the youngest of which has a year or two remaining in college here at WSU. This is a nice way of saying that we are excited to be almost finished paying tuition!

Professionally, I have held many positions covering a wide range in program development, budgeting, promotion, and administration. Congregational involvement over the past thirty years has included leadership roles in many congregational ministries such as fellowship, education, and evangelism. A lifelong Lutheran Christian, I have had a love for God and the church from earliest memory, and look forward to serving the church in this new networker role.

*(Continued from page 9)*

center. Shera and Renee went to Wartburg Seminary at the same time. “It’s just a big blessing that Renee and I get to be where we’re at and work together,” said Shera, adding that the ministry they do at Heart River is “grounded in relationship.”

“Heart River is a place in which the gospel takes on flesh in a very real way,” Renee said. “We speak candidly about the cross and the resurrection. It’s just that when half [of the people at the congregation] can leave and the rest are locked up, it makes the struggles of life very real.”

Many of the youth – adolescent boys and girls – who’ve ended up at the correctional center have suffered abuse and neglect, and most struggle with addictions and are incarcerated for drug-related offenses. Most of the youth, 12-19 years of age, need treatment. “Every young person comes with his own set of challenges that he’s facing,” said Shera. “A lot of them know that they are responsible for their choices.”

“Most of the time when the kids come, they are at rock bottom,” Renee noted. “They’re asking the ‘God Question.’ Many have suffered greatly. Here we are as a church meeting them where they are.”

But Heart River is not just about reaching out to troubled kids. These young people fully participate in the life of congregation. They are ushers, readers, communion assistants. “We as a congregation feel it’s not a ministry to, it’s a ministry with,” said Renee. “They are all very gifted and have a lot to offer to the life of the congregation.”

Taylor, 19, came to the correctional center last year for using and selling drugs. She’d been using drugs since sixth grade and is in recovery from a methamphetamine addiction. She was released last December. When she came to Heart River, she said, “It was at a time when I was really vulnerable. I was pretty broken when I went in there, and the church and the people and the things they would do with us kind of helped me find myself.”

“I wasn’t big on emotions, but I definitely cried in that church a lot,” she said, recalling one time she sobbed in front of everybody when she had gotten the news a friend had died. “They pulled me up to the front,” she remembers. “They all hugged me. Everybody prayed for me.” She said she absolutely loves the idea of having the church on campus and having people from the outside visit. “When I was in there, I would sometimes seriously go nuts [staring at the walls] and think that there was nothing else out there that existed. I had also given up on everything and that’s where I found my faith again.”

Renee visited with her at her cottage and provided services right there, including Bible studies. “She is so nice, so thoughtful,” Taylor said. “Anytime we had questions, she was open [to them].”

Renee said Heart River created their re-entry ministry, Bridges of Hope, in response to the question: “How is God calling us to further engage in the lives of these young people?” Back in 2010, the congregation gathered to discern how they might best continue to support the youth in their lives and faith journey after they left the correctional center. With the help of the ELCA’s Western North Dakota Synod, Eastern North Dakota Synod and the North Dakota Conference of Churches, Heart River is able to support Shera’s half-time position, asking all three entities to financially match what Heart River is putting forth in this effort for three years in order to build the ministry and make it sustainable.

Bridges of Hope supports youth after they leave the center through prayer, mentoring, social activities and opportunities for connection as they re-enter the community. The program works in partnership with state agencies and other non-profit organizations that work to provide the best re-entry care for the youth. During the last two years, they’ve trained about 75 people and 25 more have applied to become mentors. “We have teams of people willing to ‘walk’ with one student,” Shera explained.

June Lehr, a member of Heart River, as well as a nurse and mentor, said, “It’s just showing that you care and showing them how important they are.” One of “her girls,” Laura, lives in Montana. They are in regular contact. When she was at the correctional center, Laura “decided she needed to be baptized and chose me as her godmother. All I’d ever done was share the peace with her at church,” June said.

Shera said she’s been to a number of trainings where she’s heard over and over again that if there’s one adult who cares about a young person, he or she is much more likely to be resilient when faced with trials, hardship and suffering. “Most of ministry

*(Continued on page 12)*

*(Continued from page 11)*

thrives off a relationship," she said. "These kids won't be successful in their lives unless they have relationships. We all need someone in our life to be rooting for us when we're not able to do this for ourselves."

At Heart River, they have a beautiful tradition of sending off youth as they re-enter the community to begin new lives. They give them a quilt – donated by individuals and congregations – which Renee says is a way for people and congregations to express their care for them.

At the end of every service, congregation members stand behind each young person who is leaving the center with a quilt. Together, the congregation says a special benediction, and along with the quilt, youth receive a card printed with Jeremiah 29:11: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your well-being and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." "They do have futures with hope, but they don't always know it now," said Shera. "It's important as we proclaim a message of hope in their midst, trusting God's work in their life even as they continue on their way."

Taylor is living on her own and works at a thrift shop in Mandan. She sees her family, belongs to a non-denominational church and talks to "Pastor Renee" regularly. She's looking forward to starting college and becoming an addictions counselor. "I feel really good about my recovery," she said. "I show up to go to a job every day." And while she has her bad days, she said, "I'm really optimistic."

She added, "The quilt is still in my room – that's one thing I'll never get rid of. For me, it symbolizes a new beginning."

Thank you for your Mission Dollars (Benevolence) which is helping to change lives in North Dakota.

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## GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH SUPPORTS ELCA GOOD GIFTS WITH "BACKPACK BUDDIES"

by Gina Tonn

Over the summer Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Downers Grove, IL posed a simple yet exciting challenge to its congregation: Read Books, Help Children.

The congregation holds a Summer Reading Program to encourage members, particularly children, to continue to visit the Memorial Library at Gloria Dei over the summer months. The Memorial Library is dedicated to providing resources for spiritual growth and to enriching the work of the congregation. This summer, however, the Summer Reading Program took on a new dimension with the addition of an ELCA Good Gifts matching challenge. Gloria Dei's Library Committee and Mission and Justice Committee partnered to envision "Backpack Buddies." Through the Backpack Buddies challenge, each participant in the Summer Reading Program was asked to set a reading goal of a certain number of books from the library, and adults were asked to sponsor them by pledging to give one dollar per book read. The money raised would go toward the ELCA Good Gifts program to provide schools supplies for children in need:

### **Ten Books = Ten Bucks = School Supplies for One Student**

35 children, who ranged in ages from 3 to 12 years, enthusiastically made their pledges at the start of the summer, and 32 sponsors signed up, some sponsoring multiple readers.

Each Sunday that summer, the Memorial Library was busy with families returning books and checking out new ones. Each challenge participant had a reading progress chart to keep track of the books they read. The charts were hung up in the church's gathering area for the whole congregation to see and celebrate. By the time Sunday School began in September, 185 books had been read through the Backpack Buddies challenge. The Mission and Justice Committee collected \$430 – well beyond the \$1 per book promised!

The Backpack Buddies challenge was a success. The Memorial Library met its goal of increasing use over the summer, new connections between adults and children in the congregation were established, and 43 children will benefit from the donations for school supplies through ELCA Good Gifts.

To donate \$10 for school supplies for a child? Visit the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog at <https://community.elca.org/ELCAGoodGifts>

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*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 . . .*

*Pray with us*

Rev. Laura Lynn, for continued healing.

Rev. Bob McCoy, for healing after surgery.

Jon Browder, receiving hospice care.

Congregations and Pastors in call process: Emanuel Lutheran - Blackfoot, ID;

Bethel Lutheran - Firth, ID; Immanuel Lutheran - Grandview, WA;

Trinity Lutheran - Bonners Ferry, ID; First Lutheran - Sandpoint, ID

New Day Lutheran - Idaho Falls, ID, may they find peace and direction in this time of growth and change.

Rev. Dan Forsgren and Trinity Lutheran - Coeur d' Alene, ID on his upcoming installation, December fourteenth.

First call pastors attending First Call Theological Education.

For those who suffer loss, may they be comforted.

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

From the Synod Staff we pray for all a blessed Advent and joyous Christmas



*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.



## Christian Education Network of the ELCA

*"... that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love ..."*  
Colossians 2:2

Rostered leaders, lay leaders, & lay volunteers,  
are you feeling overwhelmed with responsibilities for faith formation and Christian education?

There is help!

We invite you to become a member of the  
Christian Education Network of the ELCA

Learn all about us at  
[www.faithfulteaching.org](http://www.faithfulteaching.org)

New website – including a weekly blog, resources, links!

New free Mentor Program for members!

Monthly e-newsletter!

Active Facebook group!

We care deeply about your ministry!  
Region 1 contact: Lorie Hughes, Billings, MT  
([glsmahughes@bresnan.net](mailto:glsmahughes@bresnan.net); 406-656-3552)

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of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



December 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  
<http://www.ewaidsynod.org/synodpublications.html>.  
*Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.*

Synod Calendar

**November 2014**

- 17 Synod Assembly Planning Committee
- 17-20 First Call Theological Education
- 27 Thanksgiving
- 28 Synod Office closed

**December 2014**

- 25 Christmas

**January 2015**

- 12-14 Byberg Preaching Conference, Cannon Beach
- 22 Rural Ministry Meeting- Elmore, ID
- 22 Executive Committee - Spokane, WA
- 23-24 Synod Council - Spokane, WA



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

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# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Editor: Cynthia Woolever - [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

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### How to Make the Most of a Consulting Process

Church leaders face challenging questions without simple answers. Questions like, should we relocate to a new community, construct a new building, or renovate at our existing site? Hire a new staff person or reconfigure the job descriptions of our current staff? What kind of pastoral leadership will we need when our current pastor retires? Church-wide decisions like these reflect high-risk choices, which tempt members to maintain the status quo.<sup>1</sup>

#### Why Hire a Consultant?

Change is the underlying objective behind every effective consulting process. Leaders hire a consultant when choosing among multiple options seems impossible and perhaps controversial. But they know that doing nothing is no longer an option. Consultants can help the church because they are outsiders—they can see things that church leaders cannot see. Because of their broad experience, consultants know things that church leaders do not know. And consultants have the freedom to say things that local leaders cannot say. Finally, when the church pays for information and assistance, they more often act on it.

Churches often lag behind size shifts, cultural change, and community dynamics. Therefore, in many church situations, the basic problem rests in the organizational structure and how it functions—not in the church members. A consultation can help leaders update organizational decision-making processes.<sup>2</sup>

Finding the right consultant for your church takes time. Contact judicatory leaders, national denominational offices, seminaries, and other churches that have used a consultant or trained facilitator in the past. Form a small group, including the pastor, to review the list of names. Gather information on three to five consultants to learn about their background and experience with congregations similar in size to your own. Be prepared to share a brief summary of the issues facing your church. Then, draw up a list of questions to ask each possible candidate. Set up conference calls or Skype/Face Time sessions with the top three candidates. Once the committee comes to a

consensus about the best candidate, contact several churches that have used this consultant to hear about their experiences. If their reports are positive, contact the desired consultant and begin the process.

#### Hallmarks of a Good Consultant

Unfortunately, many believe they are or could be great consultants but few measure up. A good consultant should exhibit these attitudes and behaviors:

- curious, accepting, and empathetic
- a good listener who asks novel questions rather than telling others what to do
- able to establish a trusting and respectful relationship with the pastor and other leaders
- objective and more committed to the process than a specific outcome or change
- patient yet motivated to keep working through barriers to resolve central issues
- comes without an agenda or a “one-size-fits-all” recommendation template that treats your church as a clone of the consultant’s past experiences

#### Hallmarks of an Effective Consulting Process

Although consultants vary in the details of their approach, all effective consulting rests on several



TED IS OUR CHURCH CONSULTANT...  
HERE TO PROVIDE FRESH INSIGHT, WISE ADVICE, AND  
A SCAPEGOAT SHOULD OUR DECISION BE UNPOPULAR.

key principles. A consulting process is more likely to lead to desired changes if

- the pastor and lay leaders participate in all aspects of the process, including the decision making about possible recommendations;
- the person or group who holds the veto power to block any major change are essential participants;
- the consultation is directed toward the church's agreed-upon objectives;
- the consultant makes presentations that further invite participation in the process;
- the consultant provides concrete methods for the church's next action steps; and
- the consultant's written report after the consultation is widely shared among members.

Consultation methodology is systematic so that all viewpoints and concerns surface. Typically, the consultant asks leaders to gather detailed information about

- the reasons for the consultation, including a written summary statement from the pastor that outlines what he or she wants to accomplish;
- the community setting, including population trends and religious group patterns;<sup>3</sup> and
- the opinions and values of the governing board, committees or teams, and members through questionnaires.<sup>4</sup>

Even after the church prepares this information, the on-site interaction between the consultant and leaders yields new insights. In addition to personal observations, the consultant interviews individual members, who are selected by the pastor. During the visit, the consultant holds small-group meetings with key committees or teams and staff. The consultant should make at least one church-wide presentation where observations and recommendations are shared and discussed.

In the end, an effective consultant affirms the pastor's leadership and plays the role of facilitator. During the consultant's visit, the consultant shifts any remaining functions to the pastor and leaders, which discourages long-term dependency. Success comes from the efforts of the pastor and members.

### The Power of Questions

Positive change arises from an open discernment process where committed individuals wrestle with how to do ministry together. Resistance to change comes from fear and lack of involvement in the process. Change always involves loss and grief because it asks people to give up part of themselves—their present experiences and the treasured past.

Powerful questions can persuade people to accept change and point to the rewards of new ministry methods. Answering the questions below helps churches understand who they are, where they have been, and what God is calling them to be in the future.

- If you made a list of the best things that have happened in this church during the past five years, what items would appear on the top of that list?
- If you made a list of some things that have happened during the past five years that were not so positive, what would appear on that list? Can you make a list of areas where the church needs to be stronger?
- As you look to the next five years, what are some of the challenges this church will need to address in a positive manner to build a better future?
- Assume that it is now one year from today, and this consultation process has yielded everything you thought it might in your wildest dreams. If you were making a list of the major changes that have occurred, what would be on that list?

### The Bottom Line

The consulting process may cause church leaders to face some bad news that they would rather ignore. Ignoring certain realities only leads to more anxiety. The willingness to put all issues out on the table for consideration actually reduces anxiety. Resolving the central issues that prompted the consultation won't be perfect or complete, but it will be realistic and produce desired changes emerging from the best efforts by the pastor, members, and consultant. Congregations can discover the many strengths that they already have in ministry, find unexpected hope in their current circumstances, and learn about new strategies to grow stronger in ministry.

1. These insights are based on Herb Miller's congregational consultations in more than seven hundred congregations in twenty-eight denominations.

2. See the resource at <http://www.theparishpaper.com/files/resources/Church%20Effectiveness%20Nuggets-%20Volume%2023.pdf>.

3. See Community Profile Builder (<http://www.thearda.com/profile/>); and the U.S. Census website, the American Fact-Finder (<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml###>).

4. See a survey for discovering core values (<http://tinyurl.com/ParishPaper-CoreValues>); and another survey that reveals church strengths ([www.USCongregations.org/survey](http://www.USCongregations.org/survey)).