



The Spirit

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News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Our Synod's Newest Ministries

by The Rev. Jerry Buss, Director For Evangelical Mission/Assistant to the Bishop



Of the 65 synods in the ELCA, the Northwest Washington Synod is near the top as far as starting new congregations. Currently we have 10 congregations-under-development, three second sites of existing congregations and four

exploratory worshipping communities for a total of 17 new starts.

The energy and resources invested by our synod in this area is quite significant. These new starts are supported by the synod's Evangelical Outreach Team, by congregations filling the role of fiscal agents, by prayer partners and by me as Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM).

A total of 15 mission developers are at work in these new ministries. Support for them comes from the synod candidacy committee, the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministry) program, and by people who serve as their coaches and mentors. The DEM is responsible for supervising mission developers and for overseeing a process to identify new mission developers and re-developers.

Up to half of the funding for new starts comes from the ELCA Churchwide, but our synod is expected to be a financial partner as well. About \$90,000 in synod funding is required every year to fulfill our part of supporting these new starts, with the synod share needing to grow even greater in the coming years. Also, several congregations and many individuals in our synod provide partnership support that is crucial to these new ministries.

While the support story is of great interest, even more interesting is the ethnic and multi-cultural mixture within the new starts. Five are among Chinese people, two among Latinos, one is Ethiopian and one is Indonesian. Others are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, including the Church of Steadfast Love at the Compass Housing Alliance in Seattle where worship takes place in both English and Spanish. Some reach out to particular age-ranges or groups of people who have not always sensed that the church was for them. Welcome and hospitality formed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ makes these ministries possible. (An example is Luther's Table in Renton, which will be highlighted at the Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, FL.)

The newest ministry is just now being formed and receiving synod authorization. It is an exploratory worshipping community of Taiwanese people. There are fewer than 10 Taiwanese congregations in the entire ELCA, and the closest one is in Beaverton, OR. An ELCA Taiwanese pastor, Jeremy Shih, has been holding Bible studies in the homes of Taiwanese families while they search for a place to hold worship. About 40 adults are already part of this group, with significant momentum for the future. The families come from all over the Seattle metro area, but the worship site will most likely be in Bellevue.

As you can see, new possibilities "pop-up" anywhere and at any time. The Holy Spirit energizes the mission, and we do our best to keep up. If you have a dream for a new start or if your congregation wants to support mission work here in Northwest Washington, please be in touch with me or other leaders in the synod. Thank you.

The Journey Has Water And Miracles

By The Rev. Nancy Winder, Assistant to the Bishop For Candidacy

Many years ago at Holden Village the late beloved poet Herb Brokering wrote a hymn for a baptism. The hymn was called *The Journey Has Water and Miracles*. Two young men began their life in Christ washed in the cold North Cascade waters of Railroad Creek and set out to find how God would engage them on their journeys.

A miracle is just that: a story of how God has intersected the lives of people and led them on paths they never would have discovered on their own. Those of us that have the privilege of working with applicants and candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA get to hear these stories of God at work in the lives of these people, these daily and life-changing miracles that are part and parcel of being in Christ.

On the journey that began in the waters of baptism, people of all ages and cultures come to find their path to be called as a servant of God and others in the church. In our synod we have more than 60 people who are in one part or another of this process.

The journey of Candidacy is one of formation. The first step is Entrance. It includes being enrolled in a seminary and working towards the roster to which they feel called: Ordained Ministry, Associate in Ministry, Diaconal Ministry or Deaconess. In our synod we have people preparing for every roster.

The second step is Endorsement, which takes place the year before a candidate goes on internship or begins their project and field experience. This is the time when the person declares a particular roster and continues their preparation with more specificity.

Finally, at the end of their education, each person comes before the committee for Approval and, once approved, awaits assignment and call in the church. It is a good process, and your Candidacy Committee graciously walks with these people every step of the way.

The Candidacy Committee meets once a month, often all day. It is very unusual not to have a formal interview with a candidate at

each meeting. There are ten members on the Candidacy Committee, both lay and rostered. Staff to the committee are myself, Pastor Shelley Wickstrom (Region 1). Bishop Chris Boerger and Dr. Terry Fretheim (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.) are present for Approval Interviews.

Each community of the Gospel in this synod is the beginning point for these journeys, from each infant brought to the font, through each proclamation of God's grace in Christ, in every class and conversation grounded in the word of God.

All of you, by the power of the Holy Spirit at work here in this place, call forth the these new leaders for the future of Christ's church.

If you would like to learn more about the candidacy process, please click on this link: www.elca.org/candidacy.

For anything to do with Candidacy in our synod, please contact me, Pastor Nancy Winder, at 206-383-5670 or candidacy@lutheransnw.org.

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