

CROSS

Connection



The Cross Connection is a monthly publication of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod published for its clergy, associates in ministry, lay leadership and ecumenical partners.

From the Bishop

January 2015

God's beloved People,

Just outside the window of our breakfast nook is a lilac bush, framed below by standing stalks of brown, summer plants showing death in the cold air. It is the dead-dark of winter and spent lilac blooms witness to the season that is gone.

Everything is being held in stasis for now. Nothing is moving, except by a light breeze showing in the evergreen tree. This is early Advent, the season of waiting and for many, frightening uncertainty.

In the morning newspaper are the stories of Ferguson, MO, and New York City. Names cycle across print in cold reminder that death is upon us: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice.

Michael Eric Dyson, writing about Ferguson in the New York Times, says "If our president and our nation now don't show the will and courage to speak the truth and remake the destinies of millions of beleaguered citizens, then we are doomed to watch the same sparks reignite, whenever and wherever injustice meets desperation."

Here is a new passing name, Luke Somers, an American photojournalist, being held by Al-Qaida, and we fear the story to come in the days ahead. A homeless encampment in San Jose, CA, named The Jungle is raided and a fraction of the residents find new housing while the story ends with a hundred people and their shopping carts standing beside the freeway, cars slowing to stare "like we were a parade of circus animals" said one homeless woman. Two Boeing workers win 90 million dollars in the Powerball but we know too much to be more than momentarily happy for them.

Time seems frozen, at least locked in short days, and the world is yearning for hope. Into this world come two words, the first a birth announcement and the second the hype around an alcohol-fueled turn of the calendar to January 1, 2015. New Year's is an illusion of the calendar proven by how quickly we abandon our resolutions. But the birth notice, now that's another matter.

In the words of an angel, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11).

"Do not be afraid." Do not be afraid because you are not alone. Do not be made afraid by the questions pressing for answers. Do not be afraid, but lay your fears in the straw of this manger and listen to God cry out for Life.

I look again at the Advent sign, the lilac bush: Along the thin tendrils of the plant, between the main stem and the dark and dead blossoms, are small, inch-long extensions of new growth and on the end of each is a faintly greening bud. I remember a line from a favorite poem: "[Now] the sun begins her mid-wife's task of birthing bud from sleeping flower." (Bert Bokern).

Do not be afraid. Search beyond your own dead blossoms for the bud of hope that conquers fear and listen for the cry to life that is the voice of your Savior, Jesus. And may this be a God-blessed New Year!

Bp Martin Wells



PLANNING AHEAD

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

If we are to go on a road trip to a new place with family or friends, it helps to plan the trip. First we need to identify and agree on where we want to go, which may include talking about why we want to go there. Then we look at a map or go online and use a resource that will help us find the way. We locate ourselves on the map or type in our address as well as the destination. Once we see where we are heading in relation to where we are, we have an idea of how long it will take to get there. If it is a long way we plan some rest stops. Of course we need to know who will drive and work out how much money will be needed and whether we will stick to tight budget or be more extravagant.

By now I am sure you know where I am heading with this article. If you don't plan to go somewhere you will stay in the same place. As a church body when we want to achieve something together we need to be intentional. At this time of year there are often new trip "drivers" on Church Council. The drivers need to be chosen and then you trust those leaders right? No back seat drivers criticizing at every turn. Leaders often have a retreat together which is a great time to have an intentional conversation about where you want to go as a church, agree about the destination, and develop a Mission Plan. Many people say they want their church to grow but really they feel more comfortable staying where they are. Not everyone will agree with the direction of the church but there needs to be a common goal otherwise it is like the person in the car who doesn't want to go on the trip who makes everyone else miserable.

If we are doing something new we often need outside resources; someone, or a church that knows the way or has been there before. Parochial reports help us see where we are and taking a look at them with our leaders can help us decide where we need to go. What is our vision and our hope for the church? Can we all imagine what we want, together? What is the purpose of our church? What is it that matters to us the most? What are our guiding principles; sometimes there is a mismatch between what they "should" be and what they really are. The tension leaves us going in circles. What is our motivation? If it is the survival of the church do we want to go through the change that growth brings?

Let's say we do want to go forward, we need to be realistic about how long it will take and to have rest stops along the way. Planning benchmarks and times to re-evaluate allow for any mid-course corrections in case there are unforeseen obstacles or road conditions along the way, or in case someone feels car sick. Needless to say there is a budget for the new journey in the church and if you want to have a great trip it is good to be a little more extravagant.

The word "Synod" means "journeying on the road together" and it would help other congregations if you could send in your Mission Plan to the synod office so that others can benefit from your road map or your successful trip last year. It makes a huge difference when we can budget together and churches send in their Statement of Intent for Mission Support so that as a synod we know how to travel together this coming year. I recently called a church treasurer to ask why the Mission Support in 2014 was so much less than previous years. Somehow no-one had remembered to write the Statement of Intent and so he didn't know the difference. Voting Members at synod assembly all voted to increase the budget by 9% and we don't want to go begging at the church doors because we don't have enough gas money to get home. We travel as individuals, families, churches, the synod and as part of the greater church. Life is a journey and an adventure. But we never travel alone. "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&9)



Call Process Status

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

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE	
P	Blackfoot, ID – Emanuel Lutheran	C		
P	Boise, ID – Immanuel	NV		
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	C	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	NV		
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

Calls Accepted

Rev. Andrew Hinderlie has accepted the call to serve at Trinity Lutheran - Bonners Ferry, ID. He expects to begin Jan 4, 2015.

Deaths

Richard Bridges, Associate in Ministry (NW WA Synod) and Synodically Authorized Minister died Dec. 3, 2014.

Thank you to all who contributed to victims of the summer fires!

A special word of thanks to all who made contributions to victims of the NW fires experienced this summer. Our synod was especially concerned for those caught in the Carlton Complex fire in NC Washington State. We have been working with ELCA Disaster Relief, the Episcopal Church, the Mennonite Church, and the North Central Washington Community Foundation located in Wenatchee.

With guidance from the local partners, especially Earl Tilly of Grace, Wenatchee, and Dean David Haven, we have just released over \$23,000 in contribution to the Community Foundation for Fire Victim aid, particularly case management and for temporary winter housing.

Thank you for your generosity toward our neighbors in trouble!

Bishop Martin Wells

Presidingbishop

By Elizabeth A. Eaton

Cross true gift of Christmas

With Jesus we have peace, we have hope, we are loved — and not just at holiday



MICHAEL D. WATSON

I remember this jarring image: It was the Christmas Eve candlelight service at my home congregation. A banner depicting Mary and Jesus in the manger had been hung from the ceiling at the front of the nave completely obscuring the large suspended cross. I had seen that banner on Sunday mornings, but on this Christmas Eve in the semidarkness something else appeared. A spotlight that illu-

minated the cross now shown on the banner with the effect of making the outline of the cross appear as the background of the Christmas scene.

The cross on Christmas? I didn't want the crucified Christ casting a shadow on the Christ child. Christmas is about angels and shepherds and the babe, lying in a manger, not betrayal and death. I didn't like it.

Christmas can be such a fraught season. It is forced to carry so much emotional freight. We must be merry. We must be filled with good cheer. We must be home surrounded by family. We must turn our lives into the happy endings of every TV Christmas special. There is a certain drivenness to get everything done, to get everything perfect by the stroke of midnight on Dec. 24.

Secular culture reflects this. *A Christmas Carol* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* are stories of redemption. The song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and the film *Home Alone* are filled with wistful longing. I remember a *M*A*S*H* episode where the doctors in the operating room turned the clock back to 11:59 p.m. on the 24th so a young soldier's death wouldn't be recorded on Christmas.

But what are we longing for?

Certainly we want peace in our homes and in the world. We want love and a place to belong. We want life and the end of all the deadly things in the world that bring death and destruction. We want reconciliation. We want rest. We want

hope. We want the assurance that all of this means something. We want to know that someone cares. And so we try to accomplish all of those things and squeeze it all into the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. No wonder we can find ourselves exhausted and empty on Dec. 26. The mall scene the day after Christmas—returning broken toys and ill-fitting or unwanted sweaters, the picked-over look of marked down Christmas decorations and wrapping paper—is the retail version of the reality of a broken world that doesn't know peace or love or hope. Except . . .

The hope of Christmas is fulfilled on Good Friday. The cross is part of Christmas. "Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 296). All of our Christmas glorias are realized in Jesus' glorification on the cross. We have peace. We have hope. We are loved. And not just at Christmas.

The cross is *the* Christmas gift. Through it God reconciles and heals. Through it God's love is made known and in God's love we are known and have our home. And it is a *gift*. We don't have to spend our energy and time hoping to attract the gift or the Giver by making everything right

by Christmas. If we aren't physically at home, if our lives have not turned into the happy endings of TV Christmas specials, if we are estranged from family, if we are not merry, even if we should die, this gift of life has come to us.

Let's be gentle with ourselves and each other this Advent and Christmas. Let's not fret about imperfect lives and incomplete holiday preparations. We won't ever get it completely right. That's God's work. It is the best gift exchange ever. Martin Luther wrote: "Is not this a beautiful, glorious exchange, by which Christ, who is wholly innocent and holy, not only takes upon himself another's sin, that is, my sin and guilt, but also clothes and adorns me, who am nothing but sin, with his own innocence and purity? And then besides dies the shameful death of the cross for my sake . . . that I may live with him eternally" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 51).

Good Christian friends, rejoice! ☐

Let's be gentle with ourselves and each other this Christmas. Let's not fret about imperfect lives and incomplete holiday preparations. We won't ever get it completely right. That's God's work. It is the best gift exchange ever.

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

This column originally appeared in *The Lutheran's* December 2014 issue. Reprinted with permission.

2015 Synod Assembly Information

We've had questions regarding the cost of our next Assembly. For those curious minds, and anyone else who is planning for anyone else who is planning to be in Pasco, WA for the April 24 - 26 meeting and business of our Synod, here it is:

Single Occupancy \$505
(Hotel, Food, Program)

Retired Rostered Single Occupancy \$430
(Hotel, Food, Program)

Double Occupancy \$380 per person
(Hotel, Food, Program)

Retired Rostered Double Occupancy \$305
(Hotel, Food, Program)

Commuter \$330 per person
(Food & Program)

Retired Rostered Commuter \$255
Extra Night(s) \$115-single/\$58-double

And for those of you keeping track, these are the same prices as in Spokane in 2014.



Midwinter Theological Conference

The Book of Ruth: Family and the Immigrant Experience

Dr. Diane Jacobson

Feb. 9 – Feb. 11 at the Izaak Walton Inn, Essex, MT (near Glacier National Park)

We will be doing a close reading of the Book of Ruth attending both to the central theme of family and immigration as well as deep consideration of how we teach the biblical narrative in our congregations. Join us for conversation, education, fellowship, prayer and rejuvenation

Registration Deadline: January 8

After Jan. 8, our room block will be released.

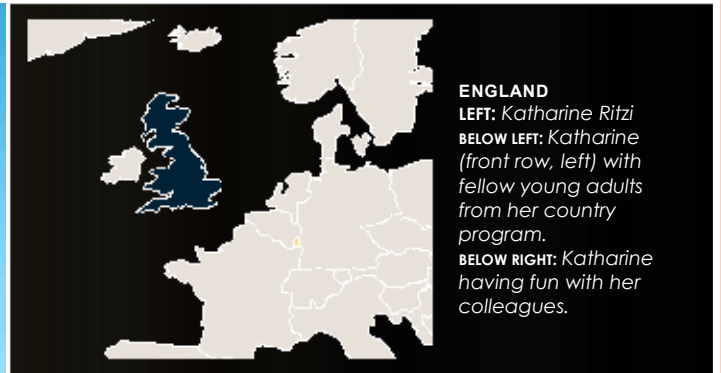
*Please register with NRIT and we will make the room and meal reservations for you.

Sponsored by the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology, a lifelong learning ministry of the Montana Synod, offering education for clergy and lay leaders throughout the region.

Mission of the Month

STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL CHURCH

2014 NO. 8



ENGLAND

LEFT: Katharine Ritzi
BELOW LEFT: Katharine
(front row, left) with
fellow young adults
from her country
program.

BELOW RIGHT: Katharine
having fun with her
colleagues.



The gift is you

Katharine Ritzi, who recently returned home after her year of service as an ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission, reflects on what her experience as a reading tutor in London has meant to her.

“As I was preparing for this year of service, my pastor spoke to me words that I couldn’t comprehend until living through this journey. He said, ‘Ultimately, the gift is *you*.’”

“As Young Adults in Global Mission, we teach English, we work in churches and we lead youth groups. We work in centers for social justice and we serve in rehabilitation centers. But ultimately, no matter what we may be doing, we are building relationships.

“As we intentionally allow ourselves to become vulnerable, we are humbly learning that we are the gift, as well as the people we are walking beside. We are learning that we did not *become* missionaries by being accepted into YAGM; we are realizing we’re all *born* missionaries.”

The ELCA hopes that Young Adults in Global Mission will be a transformative experience for each of the participants so that they will return ready to be leaders in transforming the ELCA. As Katharine says, “I once heard it said that the ELCA sends out YAGMs to be messed with, so when we come back home we’ll mess with the church.

“But no matter how it’s phrased, we will return home with a greater understanding of how God is rejoicing and weeping in every corner of the world.”

Get involved!

To learn more about Young Adults in Global Mission or how you or your congregation can sponsor one, visit www.ELCA.org/YAGMsupport or email globalchurch@elca.org.

Expanding the Young Adults in Global Mission program is a priority of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA. Learn more about this Campaign at www.ELCA.org/campaign.



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

Ministry in our Four Corners . . .



ELCA Missionary Profile

The Rev. Miriam AE Schmidt
Jeremy A. Blyth
Slovakia

Miriam serves as the pastor of the Bratislava International Church and coordinator for the Young Adults in Global Mission Program in Central Europe. Jeremy serves as associate to this role.

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Save the Date



SAVE THE DATE!

34th Annual Rural Ministry Conference

March 1-3, 2015

[Register Now](#) for
the 2015 Rural
Ministry Conference!

The Center for Theology & Land at Wartburg Theological Seminary hosts the annual Rural Ministry Conferences each year, which address issues and themes pertinent to the well-being of rural communities and the ministry of rural churches. This year's theme is [Practicing Care in Rural Congregations & Communities](#).

The keynote speakers at this year's Rural Ministry Conference are Dr. Jeanne Hoeft and Dr. L. Shannon Jung. The conference will include worship, speakers, workshops, and Bible study, and offer participants a unique opportunity to network with others who are active in and concerned about rural ministry. Presenters come from a variety of denominations. [Learn more.](#)



. . . and around the World

Vicky (Victoria) Hart

Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) – United Kingdom

Location of Service: Winchester, England - Chaplain's assistant.

Blog: <http://onmywayuk.tumblr.com/>

Home Bases: Memorial Lutheran Church, Vancouver, WA; Camp Lutherwood, Cheshire, OR; Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Idaho; Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Moscow, ID; Troy Lutheran Church, Troy, ID; St. Gertrude's Monastery, Cottonwood, ID

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE! HERE'S HOW TO GIVE:

By check: Make payable to "ELCA Global Church Sponsorship" with "Vicky Hart GCS3129" in the memo line. Give through your synod office or mail your check to: ELCA Gift Processing Center, P O Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

By credit or debit card: Call 800-638-3522 and specify "Vicky Hart GCS3129"



A Note from the Region 1 Office

Dear Region 1 Partners,

As you may know we have a new bookkeeper in the Region 1 Office. Leslie Frederick began with us just over a month ago and received extensive training/coaching from retiring bookkeeper Judy Webb and our current accountant Alyce Bakker.

Leslie is a gifted church leader and certified bookkeeper. She was selected from five gifted interviewees. We're delighted to have her on board! Here is what Leslie writes about herself:

Leslie Frederick is from Everett WA and has currently been the Lutheran Campus Ministry bookkeeper for the past 10 years. She served on the board as the Treasurer prior to her serving as bookkeeper. Leslie also worked at Central Lutheran Church in Everett for 5 years and First Lutheran Church Bothell for 3 years. She enjoys spending time with her family, especially her two grandchildren who also live in the Everett area. She is an avid reader and has recently taken up quilting to try to master in her spare time!

Leslie's Region 1 email is leslie.frederick@elcaregion1.org

Let's welcome Leslie!

Mark Nelson



Join us on Facebook!

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

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SOLDIER

by Charity Springer

Every day Alex Brown starts his day at 6 a.m. He doesn't go to work and sit at a desk or teach in a classroom. Instead, he prepares, and helps others prepare, for possible deployment. Alex, a combat medic stationed at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, manages operations at a clinic for his battalion. After quick fixes, he handles patients. His infantry battalion has 800 soldiers and he handles the health care for all of them. The medics make sure everyone at their base is medically ready and up to standard for possible deployment. They make sure everyone is good and healthy, and if they're not, they set them up with the proper care and are allowed time to heal and recover appropriately.

"The basic medics are constantly preparing for combat settings. As medics we train and do medicine. Whatever we need to do when we head out somewhere," said Alex. They also do movement drills and spend time on rifle ranges to better their combat skills.

Mark Morton, a gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps stationed at the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, spends many of his days with students and teaching them about the possible situations they may face. "My tasks vary from administrative tasks, troop handling, instruction in basic military subjects, field training and close order drill. I also take the students to the field for one week in the second phase of our training. During this time we remain in the field, learning basic tactical formations, land navigation, tactical movements, as well as completing the rappel tower, gas chamber, confidence course, day and night land navigation, medical simulation training and team building exercises," said Mark.

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Although Alex and Mark are in two different places doing two completely different things, they are similar in some ways. They have both traveled to several places, been deployed to Afghanistan, and they both agree that their congregations, whether they are home congregations or ones near their bases, are very important to them during this time in their lives. Alex explained the benefits of being involved with a nearby congregation, Christ Lutheran Church. “I found a local church in Clarksville, Tenn. It’s very warm, very welcoming, and military friendly. People there are active and retired and part of the military life. It’s a unique camaraderie. Every Sunday, we have a time to pray for all soldiers,” Alex said. “It keeps me connected and grounded in faith and involved in doing community things, and I feel that I am able to connect with the broader church.”

Mark also described why his congregation is important to not only him, but to his family as well. “My family and I constantly move, usually once every three years. My church is my family away from my family; they fill an important role in my life, as well as my family’s life. Many times, I am away from home, ranging from a few weeks of temporary duty or six- to eight-month deployments. My church steps in to fill the gaps while I am away.”

There are ways that congregations can care for their members that are deployed or stationed somewhere away from home. Care packages are always a good way to show support, and one of the biggest ways to care for them is to be involved and keep in touch. “Receiving communication from that home congregation while you’re away is touching. I remember receiving a letter that was really heart-felt, but it’s also nice to be able to continue to know what’s going on with your home congregation,” said Alex. Care packages and communication is just one way we can thank those who are doing so much for us. Alex explained, “Being able to take care of my guys – my battalion – is the best. I joined to provide good care for others who lay their lives down for our country and for us. I’m able to take care of them and that’s an awesome experience and journey.” “Being a Marine gives me the opportunity to serve my country and to be a part of the armed forces that keeps America free,” said Mark.

No matter what military personnel do from day-to-day, where they serve and what sacrifices they make on behalf of others, congregations are an important source of recognition and appreciation, and individual and family support and care.

FOOD-TRUCK CHURCH ON THE MOVE

by Jo Ann Dollard

If you happen to be on the east side of St. Paul, Minn., on Thursdays during lunchtime, there’s a place where you can get a fresh, healthy meal – free of charge. Enjoy a homemade meat or veggie hand pie and salad, along with a cool glass of water and a genuine sense of community. And if you feel like attending, there’s a Bible study and prayer service at 12:30 p.m.

This new mobile restaurant and portable church, called Shobi’s Table, a ministry of the ELCA, is open for business and is reaching out to people confronting homelessness and other hardships. The food-truck ministry serves an average of 80 people every week at a variety of locations, including the state Capitol. Why the name, Shobi’s Table? You can find Shobi in 2 Samuel 17:27-29, which describes how he provided hospitality and nourishment for King David and his people in a time of need, offering them an abundant feast of bread, lentils, honey and barley, as well as fellowship and a safe place to eat. Interestingly, the Hebrew root of Shobi means “nourishment.” “I joke that we’re the Lutherans with the tent revival,” says Margaret Kelly, pastor of this unique venture and new mission start described as “a ministry of, by and for folks struggling on the margins in St. Paul, Minnesota.” When [people] come to our food truck, they are standing in the sanctuary,” she says. “We read Scripture and say prayers together.”

A little more than a year ago, Shobi’s Table was just an idea in Margaret’s head. As a pastor and a social worker, she said, “I had an image of taking church to the street.” Margaret remembered thinking, “A good meal would be a way to bring people into church.” Informing her vision was her experience as a case manager at an emergency shelter in Minnesota’s Ramsey County. During the three years she worked there, she noticed that the people who came for help had several recurring issues. People

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with mental illness have serious health issues to cope with related to their medications, including obesity and diabetes. A lack of access to fresh food exacerbates these problems. And while there are food pantries and food “shelves” in the area, these generally do not offer fresh and minimally processed food. Equally as important, people with these challenges may not be able to manage full-time employment but still need meaningful opportunities to work and engage with the community. Margaret notes a lack of transportation is also a significant barrier for people at the margins.

Noah, 38, who was formerly homeless and now volunteers at Shobi’s Table, as well as at the Wellness Center at First Lutheran Church in St. Paul – which Shobi’s Table grew out of – was involved with the ministry when it was just in the planning stages. “It was divine intervention when Margaret Kelly stepped in,” he said. “All of us said that the food truck would be the way to build community and build relationships with people that we serve.” Conversations about a food-truck ministry continued at an ELCA conference in May 2013 in Baltimore. The idea was met with great enthusiasm. “We got a lot of ideas and connections through that and brainstormed together,” Noah said.

Paul Erickson, former director for Evangelical Mission for the ELCA Saint Paul Area Synod, who worked with Margaret as she developed the idea, agreed: “We’re both convinced this is a ‘Holy Spirit thing.’ Every time Margaret asked a question, she kept getting ‘green lights.’” Perhaps one of the largest green lights flashed on when Margaret approached John Hogenson, lead pastor at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, Minn., about becoming a congregational partner with Shobi’s Table. “He loved our proposal,” she said. He also told her, “I know someone with a food truck.” That someone happened to be a member of his congregation who was looking for other organizations to use his truck on days when he wasn’t. Then St. Andrew’s proceeded to make a grant to purchase food for Shobi’s. And another green light flashed earlier this year when Shobi’s Table received a Domestic Hunger Grant from the ELCA. “I’m happy that I have a shoestring budget because I get to be in relationship with some really phenomenal partners,” said Margaret. “I wouldn’t be able to do this without support from the ELCA, synod and congregations.”

“The vision that’s driving Pastor Kelly is developing a word and sacrament community that engages people at the margins,” Paul explained. “They’re the ones who are preparing and serving food. This is a ministry to and among people.” “It’s people in poverty serving themselves,” said Margaret.

Ten people show up regularly on Thursdays to prepare the meal at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church in St. Paul, which graciously lends their kitchen to Shobi’s. The dedicated workers can get there easily, thanks to public transportation. And once the hand pies and salads are ready, they’re off to serve lunch. Among them are Noah, Candy and her daughter and fiancé, and Maurice, a father who brings his 1-year-old along. Like Noah, about two-thirds of the group has been homeless and some struggle with mental illness and addictions. Some people are in recovery, and some are working poor, while others are working toward employment. “They are the evangelists,” said Margaret of the group. “I’m there for good order. They walk up and down the block and invite people [for a meal].”

Noah, who is originally from Boston and was homeless from 2005-2008, said, “The reason I became a volunteer is because I was once homeless. I do it for two reasons – to give back to those that helped me and to show those we’re serving that there is a way out, if you choose it. It may not be tomorrow, it may not be next year, but things can and will change.” The hope is that over time, relationships and a community will form. “The last time we were out, people remembered us from the time before,” Margaret said. “A few brought friends. As had been the time before, people were eager not just for food but for prayer.”

Margaret said the overwhelming message she hears is that people – and congregations – aren’t sure how to help people in poverty – in a way that builds relationships and isn’t simply a hand-out. Congregations are “good at doing [charity] but not sure how to have some mutuality in the relationship. ... They’re willing to let me try [this] because I have the skill set.” And Shobi’s Table is built entirely on relationships. To further the goal toward mutuality and creating win-win partnerships in the future, Margaret hopes to have congregations hire Shobi’s Table to cater their events. That way, “Instead of us receiving charity from them we’re giving them a service,” she explained. This ministry “just keeps opening for us, which is also very scary,” she added. “We’ve been called into this and given the resources. It seems very big, but we’re just serving a meal, saying prayers and being community together.”

Thank you for your support through your Mission Dollars which is making this ministry possible.

*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

The family of Rev Jim Miley, former Interim Region 1 Coordinator on his passing, the evening of November 26.

The family and friends of Cindy Inch (Rev. Tom Inch - Ephrata, WA) on the passing of her father Richard Harold Lundberg.

The family and friends of Synod Net-Worker Linda Howell (Rev. Wes Howell, Trinity Lutheran - Pullman, WA) on the passing of her mother Marilyn Oline Moen.

The family and friends of Kevin Harvey-Marose (Rev. Peggy Harvey-Marose, Grace - Lewiston, ID) on the death of Kevin's father, Norman Marose.

The family and friends of Rev. Richard Bridges at the time of his death.

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.

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@ewaidsynod.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 New website – including a weekly blog, resources, links!
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Region 1 contact: Lorie Hughes, Billings, MT (glsmahughes@bresnan.net; 406-656-3552)

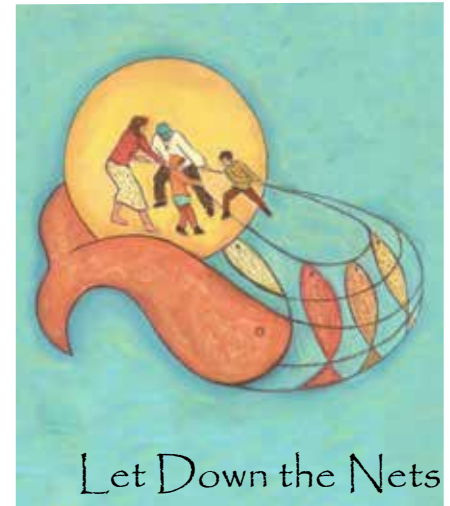
**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



January 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.ewaidssynod.org/synodpublications.html>.

Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.

Synod Calendar

December 2014

Synod Office closed 23-26

25 Christmas

Synod Office closed Dec 31- Jan 2

January 2015

12-14 Byberg Preaching Conference, Cannon Beach

17 Building Bridges Event in Pasco
w/ Pastor Alex Schmidt

22 Rural Ministry Meeting- Elmore, ID

22 Executive Committee - Spokane, WA

23-24 Synod Council - Spokane, WA

31 Washington Legislative Conference
at St. Mark's - Spokane, WA2

February 2015

6-7 PLU Board of Regents



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

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Our Future Pastors: Assessing the State of the Pipeline

Significant trends suggest that attracting and preparing people for pastoral leadership is becoming more difficult. What obstacles stand in the way of supplying congregations with the kind of leadership required in the future?

Their Preparation for Ministry

Those who wish to be congregational leaders typically obtain the Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) lists a membership of 275 schools, with enrollment of around 30,000 M.Div. students. Currently, two out of three M.Div. graduates seek to serve in parish ministry.¹

Seminary enrollments peaked in 2006, but have declined about one percent annually since. Student enrollments reflect the changing religious environment—declining attendance, weakening denominational support, and financial challenges. Those tracking seminary enrollments do not predict substantial growth of the student population over the next ten years.²

Question: Two trends stand out in theological education—a declining number of people attending seminary and a decreasing number of current ministry students planning to seek a pastoral position. Will there be an adequate supply of seminary-trained pastors to meet the demand in the future? It is not clear because two other trends stand out in the context of the local congregation. Currently, the average age of pastors is 55; therefore, the number of retirements will rise, creating vacancies. With the shrinking size of many congregations, fewer churches will be able to employ a full-time pastor after the retirement of their current one. How will these trends affect congregational needs for pastoral leadership?

The Demographics of Current Students

The profile of those seeking theological education shifted in terms of average age, gender, race, ethnicity, and marital status over the past decade. The enrollment decline in recent years is almost entirely linked to a falloff in white student enrollments.³

Over the same period, the percentage of Hispanics enrolled increased by 50 percent; the African-American percentage grew by 13 percent.

Seminary enrollments show a decline for students in their twenties, thirties, and forties. However, enrollments for students fifty to sixty-five years of age grew modestly and stabilized. The cohort over sixty-five years of age continues to grow. Once overall enrollments began to fall, enrollments for women fell faster. The percentage of women currently enrolled in M.Div. programs has stabilized at about 30 percent. Further, the profile of women preparing for ministry confirms that they are more likely than men to be unmarried, older, or single parents.

Question: Today's seminary students are less likely to be mobile and able to relocate compared to students in the past. To overcome the barriers of location, seminaries opened extension centers or branch campuses, offered night and weekend classes, created "online" or "distance" education, and/or created hybrid courses using these new strategies. Will these new approaches meet the needs of underserved populations seeking to answer the call to pastoral ministry?

Why Do They Go to Seminary

Most seminary students say that they are seeking a M.Div. degree because they are responding to a call



"I SEE YOU RECEIVED YOUR SEMINARY DEGREE THROUGH A DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM..."

from God. Other reasons are important as well—a desire to serve others, to find spiritual fulfillment, for personal growth, and for intellectual development.

Pastors and other leaders spend significant amounts of time mentoring and training people for ministry. A number of seminary students named the congregation in which they grew up as a significant influence in their sense of call to ministry. They spoke of the “tap on the shoulder” by the pastor or an admired member, who recognized their gifts for ministry.⁴

Question: Some congregations emphasize a theology of vocation, which expects that God calls everyone, every day, to ministry. Other churches that practice a culture of calling, a place where people hear God’s call, are relationally healthy and create many leadership-development opportunities for both young people and adults. Does our congregation identify and nurture future ministers?

Their Financial Lives

Although the average cost of theological education is modest compared to other graduate degree programs, tuition rates prohibit many from enrolling. Students now pay an average of 88 to 139 percent more in tuition (in real, after inflation dollars) than enrolled students in 1991. Increasingly, students carry forward educational debt from their undergraduate degree, plus any amount of debt incurred during seminary. Almost two out of three students today incur some debt to complete their masters’ degree. Roughly one in four students graduate with more than \$40,000 of debt.⁵

Post-graduation debt profoundly affects the personal, family, and work lives of students. Faced with loan payments, most wish they had borrowed less. Half said that they face difficult financial circumstances. Debt-laden students report a reduction in their standard of living, postponing health care, or making the difficult choice to take a higher paying non-ministerial position (with the hope of making their loan payments).

Question: Churches of all sizes set aside annual funds, or establish endowments, for financial assistance to seminary students. Some churches also create scholarships for college students who plan to enter seminary. Many congregations develop supportive relationships with one or more of their denomination’s seminaries. What role does our church play in making seminary training more accessible and affordable?

Their Evaluation of Seminary and Preparation for Ministry

Seminaries vary in the amount and quality of vocational guidance they provide students. Some graduates feel they received little counseling about career oppor-

tunities and experienced poor placement services. As a result, they were more uncertain about seeking ordination and less knowledgeable about, and thus less interested in, congregational ministry.

M.Div. graduates said they were most satisfied with the teaching and overall academic experience, support, and accessibility of faculty, helpfulness of administration and staff, and their friendships with other students. They believe that the seminary prepared them for ministry by developing their trust in God, self-knowledge, ability to think theologically, and ability to use and interpret Scripture. They reported lower levels of satisfaction with their ability to administer a parish.⁶

Question: Some congregations offer internships—paid or unpaid—to help people practice their ministry gifts. Other churches frequently invite seminary students to preach in their pulpit or actively seek out students looking for a “first call.” Does our congregation build the kind of relationships that form bridges for individuals making the transition from theological student to pastor?

The Bottom Line

Every congregation serves the wider church by strengthening the traits that attract people to ministry in the first place. For example, leader-generating churches take seriously the task of making disciples. They also align their resources with their vision for vital ministry rather than operating in maintenance mode. By their involvement in local mission and outreach, future ministers in their midst cannot miss ministry’s relevancy to the world.

Some churches identify, support, and send out one or more future pastors each year. Others cannot claim that a single member has entered preparation for ministry during the past twenty years. Which kind of leader-sending congregation describes our church?

1. Data based on 2010 Graduating Student Survey from ATS. Sharon Miller, Director of Research, Center for the Study of Theological Education (CSTE), conversation, November 2014.

2. B. Wheeler, A. Ruger, and S. Miller, *Theological Student Enrollment*, CSTE, August 2013.

3. A. Ruger and C. Meinzer, *Through Toil & Tribulation: Financial Theological Education 2001-2011*, July 2014.

4. B. Wheeler, et al., *On Our Way: A Study of Students’ Paths to Seminary*, CSTE, February 2014, 30.

5. S. Miller, “Where’s the Pipeline: Female Students in Theological Education,” presentation at the Religious Research Association, November 2014.

6. S. Miller, “Where’s the Pipeline.”