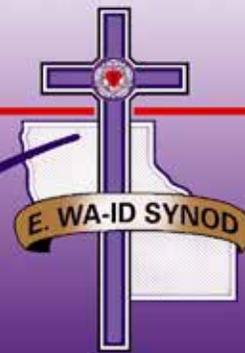


CROSS

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

April 2015

“This has been so rich!”

This was the exclamation from Bishop Kirby Unti of Seattle after two days of meetings together with other leaders of the Church in our Pacific Northwest Region 1. Kirby was referring to a day where the six bishops and assistants gathered to consider the call process and interim ministry in our synods. This was our third meeting together, gathering best practices and sharing our sense of the future for our “transitional” ministries. We’re doing this work because it seems clear the day has changed since ground-breaking interim ministry materials were developed for congregations fifty years ago. It has been deeply energizing to consider what we’re learning as synod offices and congregations experiment with this work in new ways.

Then a different group met the next day, this time Region 1 bishops met together with synod Vice-Presidents for the yearly Region 1 meeting. It was an equally rich time as we shared with one another our plans for Synod Assemblies and the missional initiatives going on in our synods. It was my privilege to be accompanied by Gary Gemar, our Vice President, in this conversation and he spoke very proudly of the work being done by a group in our synod developing curriculum resources around “end of life” issues. We’ll all be impressed by their synod assembly presentations and the work that will continue into next year. I spoke about the work of our four new Net-Workers as they hit the eight-month mark of their first year of work. We continue to have real hope that this work of binding congregations together in smaller regional groupings will pay off in confidence for each unique ministry site.

These same bishops had gathered just two days earlier in Chicago for the spring meeting of the Conference of Bishops. An innovative change in our agenda gave us time on Saturday both to offer and attend sub-groups around particular issues. I convened the conversation on call process and interim ministry because of our regional work and was joined by 12 other bishops for a lively exchange. During the rest of our time together as a Conference we offered advice to the ELCA Church Council, reviewed the work that needs to be done to be ready in 2016 for a Churchwide Assembly, reviewed our sacramental practices document, *The Use of the Means of Grace*, and worshipped and sang and shared stories about the work.

“This has been so rich,” was the summary comment by one bishop, and I want to make it my own! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Your church is alive and well and generating hope around our future in faith! In practical and institutional terms, this is the way the Resurrection of Jesus urges us into God’s future with hope! I pray that Holy Week and Easter Sunday both prepare you and make possible your own resurrection in hope. God has promised us Life and made it our future in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Thanks be to God,

Bp Martin Wells



THE CHURCH OFFERS RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTION

by Pastor Helga Jansons Director for Evangelical Mission

“MORE people live alone now than at any other time in history”. In 1950, 4 million people lived alone. Today more than 32 million people live alone in the US writes Eric Klinenberg, professor of sociology at New York University and the author of “Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone.” Living alone once sparked anxiety and the fear of loneliness. Now people of privilege separate from one another for the sake of freedom, control and personal space. Countless people do not have a personal connection or an intimate conversation for days.

We are increasingly disconnected from one another and social structures have disintegrated as described in the book *Bowling Alone* by Robert D. Putnam. People can be with others and still feel lonely. Even in church where people are friendly with each other and espouse love but don't necessarily include you. A visitor may get all the attention, or not. Less outgoing or confident members may feel invisible.

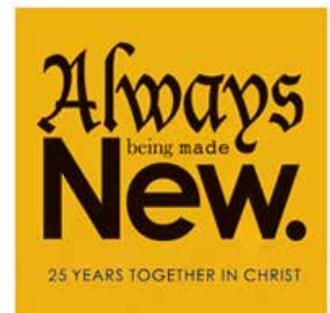
Technology can ease the pain; TV, radio, computers and cell phones. But it is increasingly acceptable to use electronic devices while with people. For someone who is in the company of a person who is spending a lot of time on their device there is a feeling of abandonment. The stages of “Blackberry Abandonment” are confusion, discomfort, irritation and then outrage (Pamela Eyring, Dir. Protocol School of WA). Ever felt alone when in the presence of someone who is “cell-fish”?

There is an opportunity for the church here. We can:

- intentionally look around to see who is left out or alone, and be aware of how they might feel
- reach out to people we already know who do not have a community to belong to, or anyone to talk to about matters or life and death and faith.
- offer ministries that address our need to communicate and connect. For e.g. “Roots of Empathy” www.rootsofempathy.org is a program developed by Mary Gordon used across the world for elementary school aged children to learn to develop empathy by watching and relating to a baby.
- Church youth groups, however small, offer teenagers face to face conversations and even silence.
- Small groups are places where intimate conversations happen
- The worship greeting line may offer the one hug someone receives that week
- Listen to people tell their stories, who then feel heard and that they matter. When the church invites someone from the community to tell their story, we feel compassion.

The church is able to raise emotionally connected leaders. Studies (Mario Mikulincer, “Attachment, Caregiving and Altruism” referenced in *Love Sense* by Dr Sue Johnson) have shown that secure leaders are able to tolerate people who are different, are resilient, feel for others, act in the interests of others, and can deal with change. Leaders who are emotionally avoidant or detached are not usually supportive enough and the group morale can drop. Anxious leaders on the other hand lower productivity and do not offer direction, cause people to doubt their own abilities and are gripped by their own suffering when others are in distress. In the church, leadership development could include relationship building, open conversations and exercises that teach leaders to work as part of a team, collaborate, be more responsive, give guidance, foster confidence and trust, and support initiatives whether they succeed or fail.

As we approach Easter I am mindful of the transforming and healing power of love. We all need to feel connected and that we belong. Relationships in the church remind us that we are loved by God. We are lovable. We can grow in love; in our ability to be loving and to receive love that is offered. A person's life can be changed by the love of another. Our hearts can still grow. We have not been abandoned even if we live alone. People who are not part of a church need love and close relationships. Don't be shy about inviting someone to church during Holy Week. Your love and God's love changes lives.



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 | Boise, ID – Immanuel Lutheran | NV | Kimberly Meinecke | I |
| P | Caldwell, ID – Faith Lutheran | NV | | |
| P | Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran | NV | Betty Krafft | SP |
| P | Firth, ID – Bethel Lutheran | A | Paul Malek | TEEM |
| P | Gifford, ID – Good Hope Lutheran | A | Valerie Beesley | TEEM |
| P | Grandview, WA – Immanuel Lutheran | B | Gary Rhode | |
| P | Jackson, WY – Shepherd of the Mountains | NV | | |
| P | Kamiah, ID – Faith Lutheran | A | Phylis Stromme | I |
| P | Kennewick, WA– Lord of Life | A | Ron Shipman | I |
| P | Orofino, ID – Ascension Lutheran | A | Phylis Stromme | I |
| P | Sandpoint, ID – First Lutheran | B | Bob Chenault | I |
| P | Spokane, WA – Bethlehem Lutheran | NV | Steve Wee | SP |
| P | Spokane Valley, WA – Zion Lutheran | A | Mike Grabenstein | I |
| P | Terrace Heights, WA – Tree of Life | NV | | |
| TM | Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran | NV | Jillian Ross | TM |

Calls Accepted

Pastor Ken Carrothers of Redeemer - Boise, ID will serve Grace Lutheran - Horseshoe Bend, ID as a new partnership in mission.



Over 100 Chapel Chairs Available

Riverview Retirement Community in Spokane has 100+ chapel chairs available to any church or related organization that needs a place to sit. The chairs are a lighter (blond) colored wood frame with light blue colored upholstered seat/back cushions. If you are interested, please call Gary @ (509) 482-8127. The chairs would be available by the end of May, God-willing.

Position Open at Churchwide

Located in Chicago, the Director for Congregational Support is responsible for directing churchwide development efforts that provide designated support for congregations in three areas: New and Renewing Congregations, Youth & Young Adult Leadership, and Disability Ministries. This position plays a significant role in the ELCA's comprehensive campaign. At the end of the Campaign, the position will be responsible for only New and Renewing Congregations fund raising initiatives.

Applications (resume and cover letter) and inquiries about the position may be directed, in confidence, to Gaye Lindfors of Significant Solutions, Inc. (Gaye@SignificantSolutionsInc.com).

Here is a link to the complete Position Profile: <http://bit.ly/1wzfHSf>

Presiding bishop

By Elizabeth A. Eaton

Subtle shift to works righteousness

Jesus didn't die to change behaviors, political systems, institutions



MICHAEL D. WATSON

We are in the middle of Lent—the season of spiritual warfare, or at least really good intentions. Many of us now engage in some form of Lenten discipline. We give up something: chocolate or coffee or FreeCell. Or we add something: Scripture reading, midweek worship or service projects. This seems normal and familiar to us just as the imposition of ashes on Ash

Wednesday or crossing ourselves has become normal and familiar in many of our congregations.

I remember a time when none of these practices would be considered Lutheran by large segments of our church. Too works righteous, too showy, too ... Roman Catholic! We didn't need to, nor could we make ourselves holy or righteous. That was the whole point of justification by grace through faith apart from works of the law (Romans 3:21-28, Article IV of the Augsburg Confession).

We overcorrected. Fasting, prayer, Scripture study, acts of service, imposition of ashes and making the sign of the cross are classical spiritual disciplines that not only have an ancient history in Christian practice but also serve to engage our whole selves in devotion to God. These practices serve to draw us closer to and make us more aware of the love of God shown through Jesus' death and resurrection that justifies sinners, but they aren't what justifies us.

As scrupulous as we have been in proclaiming grace and eschewing works in our faith practices, I've noticed the not so subtle shift to works righteousness in the work we do as the church. This exists in all three expressions—congregations, synods and churchwide—and all across the cultural spectrum. Jesus' invitation to repentance and discipleship have become a kind of transaction between us and God where we figure out what we have done wrong, promise to work really hard to be better people, and then God forgives us. What we see as the moral wrongs that must be repented

depends largely on our place on the cultural spectrum. The cultural right is preoccupied with private mores and behavior and the cultural left is preoccupied with political rights and the activities of government and business institutions.

Here's how that plays out. While driving through the Smoky Mountains on a family road trip, I saw a billboard that declared: "No smoking, drinking, card playing, dancing, movie going, swearing ... there is no sin within 7 miles of our church!" Wow. There must not have been any people within 7 miles of that church. That is the works righteousness of the right.

The works righteousness of the left plays out a little differently. If there are enough sit-ins or protests, or boycotts or enough petitions, we could inaugurate the kingdom of God. Then we could extricate ourselves from this bondage to sin. We could build a perfect world.

There is a purveyor of high-end, organic, locally sourced groceries that is the temple of this persuasion. You can buy veal there without guilt because its source of veal is the little calf that, after gamboling across the fields, turns itself in to the butcher and declares (quoting Charles Dickens): "It is

a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done." No. Something has to die so we can live. We are complicit in the world's brokenness.

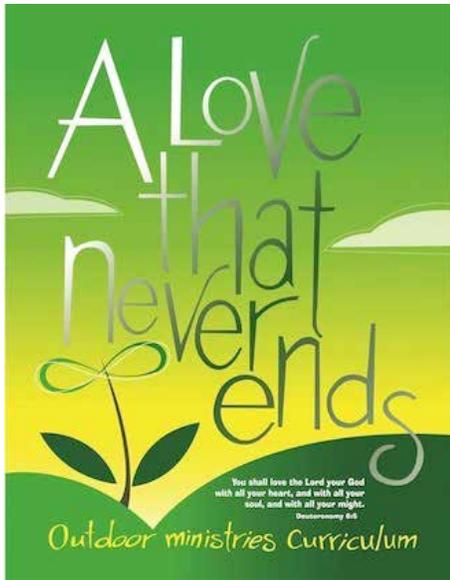
We may work for justice or righteousness with the best intentions,

and God knows there is plenty of work to do. But Jesus didn't die to change behaviors or political systems or institutions. Jesus died to end the fundamental brokenness and estrangement from God that is the result of human sin, our rebellion against God that infects every aspect of our lives.

Just as Jesus' miracles in the Gospel of John are called signs that point to the new thing God is doing in Christ, so should our work for justice be signs that point to the new life we have in Christ. We're pointing in the wrong direction if our work becomes the new life instead of a sign of the new life.

Lent can be a time to ponder this priceless gift. The death and resurrection of Christ has changed everything, a change no human effort could ever bring about. □

We're pointing in the wrong direction if our work becomes the new life instead of a sign of the new life.



Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Offers Curriculum Package for VBS

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, a non-profit organization that supports the outdoor ministries of the ELCA, has a Vacation Bible School Curriculum for use by congregations. They've taken the preschool, lower elementary/day camp Bible studies and bundled it with the crafts, games, and graphics sections of this year's curriculum, A Love That Never Ends, and have made it available to congregations.

The curriculum is perfect for churches looking to create continuity between the camp and VBS experience, or those simply looking for a new and creative approach to VBS. Plus, this VBS curriculum is also great for churches who are trying to be a little more green. The curriculum is downloaded once it is purchased, so churches don't need to worry about the extra waste (or cost) that comes with buying a fancy boxed VBS set.

For more information, visit the following website
www.lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum.

Peer Ministry Leadership Training

April 17-18 Trinity Lutheran College, Everett

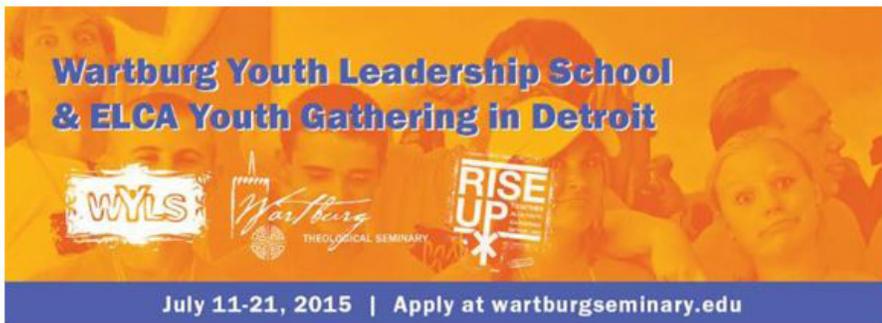
Does your youth ministry need a boost? Looking to empower teen leaders? Peer Ministry Leadership provides an opportunity to engage youth in peer-to-peer relationships through listening to, welcoming, and accompanying others. The two-day interactive training is designed for youth ministry leaders (both adults and teens) seeking to build a leadership team for a thriving youth ministry based on this model, and will be led by co-creator Lyle Griner. The low-cost event is hosted by Trinity's Children, Youth & Family Center, in partnership with the ELCA NW and SW Washington Synod youth committees. For more information and registration materials, visit www.tlc.edu/cyfcenter or contact Rev. Dave Ellingson at (425) 249-4722 or david.ellingson@tlc.edu.

April 19-21: Adult Spirituality Retreat "A River Runs Through Us"

In song, in story, in images and play, we will follow the rivers that run through scripture, flow into our Sunday worship, and stream out through us in our daily lives. These rivers call us to pay attention to, delight in, learn from, respond to, sing with, and give thanks for the beautiful, blessed, and battered world God made and called us to keep and tend. Rev. Susan Briehl will be our guest presenter. Join us for a time of renewal including: great food, study, recreation, reflection time and worship. Cost is \$175 for the entire retreat or \$75 per day. CEU credits available through NRIT.

June 5-7: Women's Retreat

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



WYLS graduates return home sharing their faith, gifts, and passionate commitment to the Gospel with newly found enthusiasm and confidence.

Wartburg Youth Leadership School & ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit

Youth are invited to experience the ultimate faith journey as they share in adventure, service, study, leading, and worship in a combined ten days as they participate in the Wartburg Youth Leadership School on the Wartburg Seminary campus and the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, Michigan. Participants consider the ULTIMATE YOU: Who claims You? Who Calls You? Who Sends You? Through the setting of an intentional Christian community, the youth are challenged to live out the Gospel and ask themselves, "How am I being called to lead?" [Click here](#) for a printable flyer and [click here](#) to learn more details about this ten day opportunity.

Which Three Youth Will You Nominate?

Do you have youth in your congregation that may already be leaders, or who have leadership potential? Please nominate them to participate in WYLS and the ELCA Youth Gathering. You may nominate up to three youth who have completed 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade. [Click here](#) for an online nomination form.



*Join us
on Facebook!*

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

Transitional Ministry Training

The Interim Ministry Network (IMN) will be conducting a 3-day training entitled, "Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry - the Work of the Leader", at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Bellevue, WA., Thursday - Friday, April 22 - 24, 2015.

This training is for pastors thinking of interim/transitional ministry, as well as pastors presently serving in interim ministry. This is the first of the 3 step process that the IMN offers that enables pastors to be recognized as trained intentional interim pastors. The training focuses on the 5 Process Tasks that the pastor utilizes upon first entering the congregation as an interim. The training also includes a section on discernment for those unsure if interim ministry is for them.

Contact the IMN@imnedu.org for registration.

The IMN does offer scholarships to their training events. Contact Ellen Goudy, Education & Membership Manager at Ellen@imnedu.org, or 410.719.1770 if you have questions about the event, or a scholarship.

Contact the instructor, Rev. Tim Wolbrecht, ELCA, at tim_wolbrecht@hotmail.com if you have any specific questions about the program.

HELP FOR UKRAINE

The Situation:

Ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has forced millions of people to flee their homes. Currently, nearly 1 million people are displaced within Ukraine and approximately 650,000 people have fled to neighboring countries. Many are living in overcrowded, underground shelters with limited access to basic necessities. With ongoing fighting, the number of refugees and those being displaced from their homes continues to rise.

In the midst of this disaster, there is hope. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is committed to walking with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are fleeing from the conflict. LDR is working with our partners from ACT Alliance, Hungarian Interchurch Aid and the Russian Orthodox Church to provide food, diapers, blankets, water, health kits, hygiene kits and psycho-social services to assist those who have fled their homes. Assistance will be provided to approximately 20,000 people who are from conflict-affected areas, with particular attention given to women and children. LDR assistance makes a huge difference in the lives of people who have already lost so much.

Your gifts designated for the Ukraine Conflict will be used in full (100 percent) to assist those directly impacted. Gifts from people like you allow us to continue our response. Make your check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and give through your congregation or send your check directly to:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gifts Processing Center,

P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009 and write "Ukraine Conflict" on your check's memo line.

Thank you for all you do to help those in need!

Barbara HarrisonCondon
208-270-1658 cell

**Come and join us
in Germany!
October 27-November 7, 2015
Price reduced!**

I am leading a tour of Luther, Bach and Bonhoeffer sites this coming October-November and invite you to be a part of it. Due to the increased strength of the U.S. dollar against the Euro the price of the tour has decreased.

Sign up now to make sure that you get the reduced price. This is a small, intimate tour - only 20 people - so space is limited.

There is an extension to Prague at the end of the tour and the price of that has also dropped. This is a great opportunity to spend a few days in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

The price in the brochure includes EVERYTHING except some of the meals and your souvenirs. No hidden costs for tipping or entrance fees. And now, with the reduced cost, you have even more money to spend on souvenirs!

Send in your deposit check as soon as possible to make sure that you get your spot on this incredible tour. Please call me if you have any questions.

Barbara



Seminars Offered this Summer at Calvin College

Cruciform Humility in Christian

Preaching and Worship

June 21-26, 2015

Director: Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.
(Calvin College)

Fundamental Practices for Intellectual Humility

June 21-July 3, 2015

Directors: Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung (Calvin College), Kevin Timpe (Northwest Nazarene University), and James Van Slyke (Fresno Pacific University)

America and China:

150 Years of Aspirations
and Encounters

NEH 2015 Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers

Seminars@Calvin
E-mail: seminars@calvin.edu
Phone: (616) 526-8558
Fax: (616) 526-6682

For application information: www.calvin.edu/scs
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Is your congregation looking for a new direction for Service Projects?

You might consider Urban Servant Corps. They are based in Denver, Colorado and offers many opportunities.

www.urbanservantcorps.org

Theologically Sound Resources

Times are changing quickly and the Association for Lutheran Resource Centers (ALRC) is looking at ways that it can be most helpful to synods - and particularly people in congregations who are looking for theologically sound resources.

One step the ALRC has taken has been to create our own Pinterest page where resources are posted. As the coordinator of ELCA resource centers, the Pinterest page currently falls under my name. But, I have invited my ALRC colleagues to post the "theological sound" resources they come across to the boards on this particular Pinterest page as well. Along with ELCA resources posted, there are many wonderful ecumenical resources that can be helpful to ELCA congregations - whether they are stewardship, Christian education, leadership development resources, or other congregational resources!

Here is the link for ELCA Resources Pinterest page:
<http://www.pinterest.com/KMatthiasLong/boards/>

Have You Taken Your Health Assessment Yet?

For more information regarding the Mayo Clinic's Assessment being used by ELCA Leaders in conjunction with Portico, follow the link below.

Earn Wellness Dollars, save money on premiums, feel well and be healthy!

<http://www.vasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Mayo-Clinic-HA-FAQ-2013-Revised.pdf>

Please take the fifteen minutes needed to help save our synod over \$19,000

Parochial Reports

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

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

St. Luke Lutheran Church (ELCA), a medium to large growing congregation located in north Spokane, Washington, is seeking a Youth Ministries Coordinator for its established, vibrant and relationship-driven ministry to 7-12 graders. This is an administrative position working with our College Leaders. It is a part-time position (20 hours per week) with benefits, salary DOE. View the detailed job description at www.slilcspokane.org. Looking to fill the position by July 1, 2015. Send the following information by May 31, 2015 to St. Luke Lutheran Church, ATTN: Admin, PO Box 28948, Spokane, WA 99228-8948 or to slilcyouth2015@gmail.com: Letter of Interest, Resume (include 3 references), Faith Statement, & one Letter of Recommendation. Job description available upon request.

Rostered Leader Reports to the Bishop

Are **NOW** available.

There had been a delay in getting the reports from the ELCA,
and they are now available at

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>



Loving the Neighbor

This is a guest post from Rev. Linda Johnson Seyenkulo, an ELCA missionary to Liberia, and wife of the Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Liberia.

I've been thinking about the Good Samaritan story lately and the concept of neighbor. "Who is my neighbor?" the Pharisee asked Jesus. Even if we are not well-versed in Christian faith or the Bible, we know the story of the Good Samaritan and the definition of neighbor. Or do we?

Recently, I was called as a missionary to Liberia, West Africa. Due to the terrible Ebola epidemic that has swept West Africa – most especially Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea – I found myself back home in Minnesota, where I grew up. For a time, I was living in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area of Minnesota. It sounds weird, but I was a missionary to Liberia deployed to Minnesota. I soon found myself connected with the Liberian community in Minnesota, which is home to the largest Liberian immigrant community in the U.S. Approximately 30-40,000 Liberians live and work in Minnesota, many of whom have been in the Minneapolis area for more than 20 years.

Seeing the reality of life for Liberian Minnesotans, given the Ebola crisis in West Africa, brought to mind the concept of neighbor and how it has been playing out in their lives. I had several opportunities to worship, preach and speak at services and events held in Lutheran churches. During some of those opportunities, there were Liberian Minnesotans present and I heard stories about how Ebola in West Africa has affected the Liberian community in Minnesota.

At a memorial service for victims of Ebola attended by about 500 people, there were stories of loss and of Ebola victims who were loved. We heard from the fiancée of the man who died in Dallas, Texas. One man shared about losing 7 family members to Ebola. He and others prayed and testified.

The stories were hard to hear, but what was even harder to hear were the stories of children being bullied at school because they are Liberian and might have Ebola. Or stories from adults who were sent home from work for sneezing or coughing because they are Liberian and might have Ebola. And stories of people's long-time co-workers and friends (some as long as 20 years) becoming distant and fearful around them because of Ebola. These are people whose only connection to Ebola is that they are Liberian and have relatives living where the epidemic is. At Lutheran church services in Minneapolis and St. Paul, people shared the same stories of bullying and being ostracized because of being Liberian. To top it off, a local politician ran an ad the night before the elections in Minnesota, telling people his opponent would not be able to protect them from Ebola (and by extension seemed to say, "Be afraid of your Liberian friends and neighbors.")

I need to say that during this same time, the Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod spoke at the memorial service for Ebola victims. The Bishop of the St. Paul Area Synod wrote a pastoral letter detailing the realities facing our Liberian brothers and sisters in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the surrounding communities to the congregations under her care. These actions were very important because Lutherans abound in Minnesota and their witness is key to living as neighbors together. It was a start, from a certain level of the Lutheran church. Some of the congregations I met with, many of them fairly recent immigrant churches (within the last 100 years), are starting to be home to more recent immigrants. In addition, a few Liberian Minnesotans shared stories about friends who had not turned away.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the man from Samaria overlooked everything that his culture and social structure told him. Instead, he saw someone who was human, like him, and needed relationship.

What we sometimes overlook is how hard it is to be neighbor to people who seem different from what we know—especially when that difference is connected to fear and stereotypes that fill our senses. Being a neighbor is a hard and time-consuming process that moves us away from seeing difference and into being connected in real and meaningful ways. It's living in love, risking in love, being connected in love. Remember, love casts out fear. Things like our fear of Ebola, what we see in media reports about people, and even popular opinion can't be allowed to take over and keep us from real and true relationship with the neighbor.

I found myself thinking how different some situations would have been if we asked, "Who is my neighbor, and what does it mean to be a neighbor?" Those are not abstract, academic questions. They are a basic part of being a Lutheran Christian; a basic ethic of how to live the way of Jesus. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." It is as simple and as difficult as that.

Pray with us

We ask that you keep the ministry of the church, our synod, and the whole world in your prayers, as well as the people listed below . . .

For the family and friends of Rich Marshall (Synod Council, Christ the King, Goldendale) on the death of his son Kristofor.

Rev. Laura Lynn, for more continued recovery and healing.

Prayers for new beginnings, and and the ability to accept unwanted endings.

For congregations and pastors in call process, may the process be positive.

For those who suffer loss, may they find hope.

For families that are torn, may they be mended.

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

For those facing the struggles of aging, may they find the new joys.

For those with medical concerns, may they find comfort and healing.

For those trying to make the world a better place, may their work be fruitful, and appreciated.

Please let us realize that we should make peace with the past, there is no way to change it.

Prayer Requests . . . to be included or removed from the Synod Prayer Request list, please send your request to the synod office@ewaidsynod.org, or call 509-838-9871.



Messiah Mission Endowment Fund Supports the Wenatchee Valley Lutheran Latino Ministry

Messiah Lutheran - Spokane, WA recently presented a check to Rev. Misael Fajardo-Perez in support of his ministry in the Wenatchee Valley. Left to Right in the check presentation photo are: Messiah Pastor Laura Olsen; Pastor Misael

Fajardo-Perez, Wenatchee Valley Lutheran Latino Ministry, receiving the Endowment Grant check; and Robert Smick MME Fund Treasurer.



EASTERN WASHINGTON IDAHO SYNOD

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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

April 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.ewaidynod.org/synodpublications.html>.

Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.

Synod Calendar

March 2015

- 13 Assembly Early Registration Deadline
- 24 Assembly Committee Meeting Pasco
- 29 Palm Sunday

April 2015

- 3 Good Friday - Synod Office Closed
- 5 Easter
- 18 LCSNW - Chocolate & Champagne Gala
- 19-21 Lutheran Staff Association Retreat @ Lutherhaven
- 24 Synod Council Meeting - Pasco, WA
- 24-26 2015 Synod Assembly - Pasco, WA

May 2015

- 2 Mission Interpreter Training - Moses Lake
- 25 Memorial Day - Synod Office closed



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Finding God's New Call in the Same Place

Bill is fifty-five and has been at Fairdale Church for fifteen years. Ministry there has lost its shine. He resists routine pastoral visits and even preaching has become a chore. However, in the current job market, finding a new call that can provide the salary he needs to support kids in college is tough. He has been looking for a while without success, so feels stuck. Church participation is down and the board is worried.

Ann has been at Oakdale for four years now and is happy in ministry with the congregation. She is feeling comfortable in the role of pastor and has some successes to celebrate. Ann's husband has a job that he enjoys and their children are thriving in school. However, her seminary friends ask "What next?" She is ready for new challenges, but wonders what is best for the family and congregation.

First Presbyterian Church in Crossroads has experienced a revolving door of leadership for the past two decades. Pastors right out of seminary developed their ministry skills for a few years before moving on. Membership declined and lay leaders are discouraged.

Why Do We Feel Stuck?

Both pastors and congregations get stuck. Pastors who are burned out, geographically bound, or financially squeezed get stuck, as do congregations who are waiting for stable leadership or a pastor to leave. Pastors usually discern God's call to a new ministry without involving the congregation until the decision is made and a new call has been finalized. However, those decisions change the course of ministry for all involved. Research shows that clergy mobility affects congregational vitality.¹ When congregations focus on getting a pastor, developing a relationship with a pastor, or the loss of a pastor, less congregational energy is available for externally focused action such as evangelism and mission. Congregations without pastors, exhibiting "holding pattern" behavior, generally are less attractive to newcomers.

In the past, it was more common for a pastor to come to a community from seminary and remain for an entire ministry. Pastorates for twenty years or more were positively regarded. Now, pastors confide that they feel pressure to move on in order to be successful in their ministerial career. Accepted patterns of clergy mobility have established expectations of short first calls. In fact, the most effective years of a pastor's ministry come after five years in a congregation when relationships have been built and tested and a true shared ministry has been established.²

The Feeling Stuck Fallout

Both congregations and pastors often feel that the best solution to conflict is to part company. When that happens, neither learn from the relationship and do not develop skills to deal with differences without breaking relationship. Opportunities are missing for living forgiveness, reconciliation, resilience, and developing skills as Christian leaders. Rather than seizing opportunities for new ministries in response to God's call, congregations resist change, hoping that the pastor and his or her unsettling ideas will soon move on. Such congregations



"I KNOW YOU'RE EXPECTING A SHORT PASTORATE...
BUT, MUST WE LEAVE THE CAR RUNNING?"

become self-focused and stagnant while the pastor begins to feel the stress of being stuck.

A stressed pastor decides that the best solution is to seek a new call and move on. That brings added pressure to pastor and family with the activities of the search, decisions, and physical move. Furthermore, our culture teaches us to measure our value by salary and the size of the church we lead. This goal is likely unobtainable considering the current membership patterns of churches. In fact, researcher Patricia Chang found that a seminarian preparing for ministry today has a 1 percent chance of ever serving as Head-of-Staff of a large congregation.³ The long-established pattern of pastoral steeplechase is dead.

Internalized measures of success and worrying about a new call contribute to heightened stress, low self-esteem, and depression. Pastors feel stuck and do not do their best work—congregations and ministry languish. Often they look for the solution for “stuckness” in the mechanics of ministry—a new program, new leadership, or a new strategy. Yet the root issue is the loss of a sense of God’s call: the energy, passion, and focus that they experienced sometime in the past.

Finding a New Call

The Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy, “Rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (2 Timothy 1:6). This is the secret to keeping vitality in ministry. Frederick Buechner tells us that to discover our call, we must look for the place “where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”⁴

Experienced pastors who have stayed with the same congregation for fifteen or more years are often able to describe a series of distinct calls in the same long-term ministry. Tom settled into the challenges of congregational life with worship leadership, pastoral visits, and church programming. Five years into ministry, he recognized that he got many requests from the community for pastoral counseling, which he enjoyed and was gifted at. The church board encouraged him to expand this outreach and supported him in continuing education to enhance his skills. Some years later, divisive social issues in his community drew Tom into a new leadership role. He understood this work as a new call in his long-term ministry. Rather than becoming stale, both he and the congregation gained new energy by discovering a series of new calls as he led them for thirty years before retiring.

As small congregations face dwindling resources, it is becoming common that they cannot continue to fully support their pastor. Recognizing that her congregation was nearing this situation, Mary used her continuing education and some time with a spiritual director to discern a new call. She agonized over the fact that she loves her congregation and her community and did not want to uproot her family. The suggestion that she was gifted in spiritual direction surprised her. Excited by the idea of a retreat ministry, Mary developed a business plan and talked with her church board. The board embraced the possibility of transitioning from full-time church employment to a bivocational ministry that would allow her to continue in the pastoral role and develop her blossoming new ministry.

By considering the activities that bring us joy and meet the needs of the world God loves, and building a ministry at that intersection, it is possible to discover a new call in the same place. Pastors and congregations are healthier when they are able to move from *stuck* to being *re-called* by rediscovering passion for ministry. By reshaping ministry in partnership with their congregation, it is possible for pastors to find the “sweet spot” of vital ministry and care for family. Consider these questions whenever you begin to get that stuck feeling in your current call.

- Think about times in your ministry work that bring you “deep gladness.” What were you doing and what gifts were you using?
- What deep needs of the world have come to your attention?
- How might you reshape your ministry to find deep gladness as you meet the needs of the world God loves?

About the Writer: The Rev. Dr. Marcia Clark Myers formerly directed the PC(USA)’s Office of Vocation and currently serves as a faculty member in the CREDO program, which focuses on pastoral renewal.

1. Cynthia Woolever, “When Less Is More; The Consequences of Clergy Turnover,” *The Parish Paper*, March 2014.

2. Roy M. Oswald, “The Pastor as Newcomer,” Alban Institute, 1998.

3. Patricia M. Y. Chang, *Factors Shaping Clergy Careers: A Wakeup Call for Protestant Denominations and Pastors*, Pulpit and Pew Research on Pastoral Leadership, 19.

4. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking; A Theological ABC* (New York: HarperOne, 1993).