

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

February 2015

God's Beloved People,

February is to some the depth of winter, and though the light is coming back in small increments, this month can feel long and frozen once the Super Bowl is past. Mid-month (the 18th) will bring us to Ash Wednesday and so it seems like the right time to think about and renew some spiritual disciplines.

The prompt came in a posting on the ELCA clergy page on Facebook. The author asked: "During a time when I was learning about myself and the issues I have to deal with, someone said to me; "you didn't have a well, John". Meaning that I lacked a healthy devotional life and my relationship with Christ was too distant. So, in that light; what are your suggestions for best practices to stay healthy in your devotional life, in your relationship with God and ways to care for yourself?"

I was glad for this question and so I offer my own thoughts and then pass the question to you. This might be a great dinner-table conversation or a devotional question to begin your next church committee meeting.

The greatest challenge to my devotional life is focus and stillness. I remember a seminary class where we looked at some prayer practices from the Zen tradition and the line I remember is "Be here now." As it turns out that is deceptively simple and devilishly hard to achieve! "Be here now." Stillness. Focus. And the breath. The most important prayer lesson I've learned is to pay attention to my breath. This is the first practice of a devotional life because it takes one to the taproot of everything else. Focus your mind's eye on the place just outside your nostrils and simply pay attention to the cool feel of the breath of life coming in and the refreshment of exhaling everything that is used up. I've learned that even three repetitions of this can work remarkable healing and stillness and prepare the heart and mind for prayer.

Beyond that preparation my most spiritually potent devotion has to do with being and becoming in my life with God. Here I turn to the notion of transformation, as "pictured" in Romans 12:2 where the word is translated "metamorphosthy." Do you hear metamorphosis? As a boy my most transfixing moments were spent along a 2 ft. wide irrigation canal running alongside our home. It was there that I saw small eggs being laid and there I saw small fish emerge from liquid sacs, only to see those same fish grow legs and eventually become small and playful frogs.

Life is always "becoming" in some way and I experience that today as the reality that, before I am in a certain posture or position in life, I can't imagine its reality. So we must be present, and patient in the moment. We are on The Way and the Way is Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection. Each moment is three things in reality: Stillness in the passing moment, a remembering that evokes gratitude, and preparation for the unknown moment just ahead. Every moment is both concrete and tentative, a history, a present reality and a vision of what might yet be. This is the well from which I drink, pulling up the first drink like the Samaritan woman in the presence of Jesus (John 4), remembering with gratitude that this life is all gift, and combined with holy anticipation for that new moment which comes in a flash!

It is paradoxical that while on this Way which is Jesus, there is deep stillness and focus, even as life is becoming, changing. Rest and remember that Christmas celebrates God with Us, the still point always becoming, known by gratitude.

God bless and keep you,

Bp Martin Wells



Befriending the Dark

by Pastor Helga Jansons Director for Evangelical Missions

Garrison Keillor affectionately jokes about the tribulations and resilience of Lutherans in the Midwest. Not only can they withstand the cold and dark of winter, it is their comfort zone. My experience in the EWAID synod is that Lutherans are hardy and tenacious; able to cope with loss, uncertainty and pain. This could be due to our still predominantly northern European heritage and partly due to our “theology of the cross”. We have a resistance to the “theology of glory” or anything that resembles a quick fix. Years ago, I did 6 months of Mission Development work where my main job was to survey and interview people in the community. I found that the greatest reason people had left the Church was because the Church was not there for them in their darkest hours; illness, loss, divorce or doubt.

Typically the Church teaches us to keep away from darkness. It is bad and associated with sin and the absence of God. So we deny, subdue, control, fight or run away from the nightlife of our souls. Anxiety, depression and addictions of all kinds are a result. Yet not all darkness is sin or lack of faith. God created the night and the day. Our darkest feelings include grief, despair and fear; fear of losing loved ones or our jobs, of dying alone and dementia, worry for our children and the survival of our churches to name a few.

It seems that the Lutheran church is well suited to address the dark and vulnerable times in our lives. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (presiding Bishop, ELCA) often reminds us that “We are the Church together”. In our EWAID synod we are a network of churches that support each other continually. At Synod Assembly we agreed to be courageous enough to collectively attend to End of Life Care issues and conversations.

On Ash Wednesday we will be reminded that we ‘are dust and to dust we shall return’. These are terrifying words. My son won’t go up to receive ashes on account of them. If he heard words like “Remember that Jesus died on the cross and is there for you in your darkest moments” he might go forward. But we pull no punches. So why not take it the whole way and do a Lenten series on all of it; grief, betrayal, abandonment, fear, despair, depression, shame, disgust, anger... It would be as “good” as Good Friday is. We can’t really get to Easter Sunday without it.

In her book *Healing Through the Dark Emotions*, Miriam Greenspan writes about the power of vulnerability in the midst of suffering, and listening to pain because “grief moves us from sorrow for what we’ve lost to gratitude for what remains. Fear of life’s fragility is transformed to the joy of living fully, with openness. And even despair becomes the ground of resilient faith – not just an opiate for our pain, but a profound commitment to life as it is.” Page 13.

Barbara Brown Taylor in her book *Learning To Walk In the Dark* contrasts churches that avoid those things that frighten us and emphasize the sunny side of faith – a sure sense of God’s presence, certainty of belief, reliable answers to prayer – as “full solar spirituality”. For her, a truer mirror of the soul is the moon that waxes and wanes; a “lunar spirituality”.

“Pain that is not transformed is transferred” (Richard Rohr). The Church could help with that. Together we could face our collective fears and encourage people to listen, trust and explore and even feel the feelings that we usually keep hidden in the dark.

Learning to tolerate pain takes courage, skill and practice. With the help of Jesus Christ who died on the cross we can befriend the dark, and live a richer and whole-hearted life. Powered by the Holy Spirit, this is a balm our Lutheran church can offer to individuals who suffer and to our broken world.



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	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	Horseshoe Bend – Grace Lutheran	NV	Tom Christensen	I
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	Thayne, WY – Star Valley United Church	NV	Al Schoonover	SP
P	Terrace Heights, WA – Tree of Life	NV		
TM	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	NV	Jillian Ross	TM

Roster Changes

Calls Accepted

Bob Stone has accepted the call to serve at Emanuel - Blackfoot, ID and Good Shepherd - Pocatello, ID. He will begin Jan 18, 2015.

Rev. Regina Herman has received a Synod Call to Mission Developer for New Day Lutheran - Idaho Falls, ID

Transfers

Frank Woodall (ret.) has transferred to the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod from the Grand Canyon Synod

Electronic Cross Connection

Have you considered getting the Cross Connection online? We love keeping our readers connected, and we love our Newsletter Assembly Crew. But if you can receive the newsletter by email, it could help us to save on some of the cost of printing and mailing over 600 copies of the newsletter. We'll even save a tree or two in time.

To subscribe by email, just let us know at office@ewaidsynod.org *Thank you*

Presidingbishop

By Elizabeth A. Eaton

Baptism begins real new year

Resolutions will always come up short in our attempts to remake ourselves



MICHAEL D. WATSON

A new year. Time to start over. A fresh set of possibilities. Out with the old, in with the new. New Year's resolutions are made—usually along the lines of self-improvement. And so, with a combination of optimism and grim determination, we set out into the New Year.

But how long does our resolve last? Days? Weeks? It's a good bet that the gym will be

a lot less crowded at the end of January than it was at the beginning.

New Year's resolutions are symptoms of our underlying dis-ease. We sense that our lives are not entirely the way they should be. We have an obscured image of the beauty and wholeness of God's good creation. There is a gap between who we are and who we have been created to be. So we try to fill that gap ourselves. We are going to eat right, work out, fix our relationships, floss regularly, lose weight, corral our calendars, clean the garage, learn another language, etc., etc., etc.

These are all worthy goals and might actually be beneficial, but they can't fill the gap. Maybe we can sustain this aggressive schedule for self-improvement past January, but probably not. Discouraged and dispirited we make it to the beginning of Lent only to do the spiritual version of New Year's resolutions. And we wonder, like Martin Luther, is it enough?

All of our efforts to achieve self-justification and self-righteousness are futile and may, in fact, be harmful. They twist and distort our relationship with God, with each other, even with creation. They become a means to an end; food, instead of something to enjoy, becomes a dietary supplement; our bodies, instead of being a gift from the Creator, become our enemies in our quest for physical perfection; other people, instead of being a loving community, become competitors. Exhausted and frustrated in our attempts to save our lives resentment sets in.

And that's really it, isn't it? We are trying to save our own lives, to stave off death. We cannot and we do not have to.

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:3-5).

There it is. In baptism we have already died the only death that really matters. The death of Christ Jesus into which we are buried is the end of death. It is the breaking of the power of sin. It is the beginning of our new life. To borrow a pop culture image, we are now the undead.

The early church understood this and enacted it in its baptismal practice. Candidates for baptism were stripped and, naked as the day they were born, went into the water. When they came out they were anointed with oil and clothed in new garments. This practice will probably not be renewed in most of our congregations—the strain on the altar guild alone would prohibit it—but it made it physically and visually clear that the baptized had left their old life and entered Christ's new life by death and resurrection.

Theologian Robert W. Jenson wrote in *Christian Dogmatics*: "My baptism broke the bond of the past on the future." In baptism freedom from the past and new possibility come together. In baptism we are now in Christ. "So if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It's been done. We are justified. We have been made righteous. We have been set free.

So make New Year's resolutions if you want, but understand that in baptism God has given us a new life, a new year, a new day. Freed from all of the emotional and spiritual energy that had been invested in the impossible task of freeing ourselves we are now free to love God and serve the neighbor.

Happy New Year! □

In baptism freedom from the past and new possibility come together. In baptism we are now in Christ.

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 January 2015 issue of *The Lutheran*. Reprinted with permission.

Bishop's Annual Meeting Letter for Congregations

The address below will take you to a copy of Bishop Wells' Annual Congregational Meeting Letter

http://www.ewaidynod.org/images/Bishops_Annual_Letter_2015.pdf

Lutheran Staff Association 2015 Annual Conference

CALM Conference of Associated Lay Ministers

April 19-22, 2015

Lutherhaven - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Speakers JoAnn Hand and Mary Morrow

<http://lutheranstaffnw.org/Conference.html#registration>

WVLLM Winter Newsletter

The address below will take you to a copy of the Wenatchee Valley Lutheran Latino Ministry's Winter Newsletter

http://www.ewaidynod.org/images/WVLLM_Newsletter_2014.pdf

Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries Training to be held at Manito United Methodist Church

February 12, 2015 8:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

This is a 201 level class being taught by Rev. Heather Seman and Rev. Dale Cockrum

Cost is \$35 and covers lunch and workbook.

<http://www.pnwumc.org/event/healthy-boundaries-201-5/>

Mission of the Month

STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL CHURCH

2014 NO. 9



LEFT: Patricia Cuyatti, an ELCA International Leader doing God's work in Peru as she helps to build relationships between member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A journey of wonder and discovery

Patricia Cuyatti is an International Leader whose journey of faith has been shaped by wonder and discovery.

When she was seven years old, Patricia wondered why so many children gathered at a nearby congregation during a school break. Her curiosity led her to discover its Vacation Bible School program – and soon after, faith in Christ.

Years later, Patricia felt God calling her to ministry. She became one of the first ordained pastors of the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church, even serving as president.

Later, Patricia was encouraged by leaders in her church to apply for the ELCA's International Leaders program. With an ELCA scholarship, Patricia began graduate theological education in the United States, where she gained wider perspectives on her faith and the world.

"Freedom and the concept of living in freedom with responsibility," she says, "really reshaped my life."

After completing her doctorate, Patricia began working with the Lutheran World Federation. In her current role, she helps build relationships between member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In her education and in her new work, Patricia has seen how Latin American women like her who discern a call to ministry face challenges unique to their context. Often limited by family and cultural expectations, they can struggle for the freedom to respond to their call. Patricia hopes that together, we can change that.

"I hope that the ELCA continues thinking about leadership development in other countries because people who are trained go back to their churches – and I hope they do go back – or to positions that contribute to their churches."

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, our church has committed to empowering 200 more international women like Patricia as part of an expanded International Leaders program.

When women leaders from our companion churches have opportunities to advance their education, the global church will grow. Patricia says, "My plan is to contribute as much as I can to the work and mission of the member churches (of Latin America and the Caribbean)."

– by Nathan Schmidt

Get involved!

You can support the education of more women like Patricia with your prayers and your gifts to International Leaders – Women. Learn more at www.ELCA.org/InternationalLeaders.



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

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Boise, Idaho

ELCA

January 1, 2014

Ministry Coordinator

Part-time; 20 hours per week

Salary: \$20,000 to \$25,000 depending on qualifications and experience. (*Health benefit included in salary.*)

At King of Glory we seek to "Reflect God's Grace" in worship through church ministries, and in daily life. We are especially committed to ecumenical ministry - building bridges with other Christians; neighborhood ministry; community ministries, and youth ministries.

Application Procedure

Provide a

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Three professional reference letters of reference. (*Reference letters need to demonstrate applicant's experience in organizing and coordinating ministries.*)

Send application materials to:

Ministry Coordinator Search
Committee Chair, King of Glory
Lutheran Church, 3430 N Maple
Grove Rd, Boise, ID 83704.

Applications may be submitted electronically to

lnovey@koglutheran.org. Screening of applications will begin January 16; position will remain open until filled.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In consultation with the pastor(s), council and committees of the church . . .

- * Coordinate ministries of the church.
- * Plan major events.
- * Foster a year-round stewardship program.
- * Create ways to engage members and visitors in ministries of the church.
- * Parish administration.

Qualifications:

- Be or become a visible participating member of the King of Glory Lutheran Church.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work with volunteers.
- Excellent computer skills including proficiency in Microsoft Office Programs.
- 3-5 years experience in a church setting desirable.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- BS/BA degree preferred.



Save the Date



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

SAVE THE DATE!
34th Annual Rural Ministry Conference
March 1-3, 2015

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.](#)



Join us on Facebook!

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

Where is it?



Building up Christ's global church - together

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

Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod High School Youth Assembly

**April 24 to 26, 2015
Friday to Sunday**



*A gathering for high school students
happening concurrent with
the Synod Assembly with youth
attending parts of the Synod Assembly
and also doing some of their own activities, service, worship and fun!*

Why Do This?

Here is a chance for youth within the synod to get to know one another, across church boundaries. They can begin to learn what our synod is and what it does. The youth can have a chance to worship with the larger body of Christ. Our youth can serve the community and they can have fun together!

For those congregations that are going to the National Youth Gathering, it will be a chance for the youth to meet one another prior to being in Detroit.

We anticipate a mutually empowering opportunity where youth attend parts of the Synod Assembly as well as having some of their own opportunities for service, worship and fun! The hopes and dreams are that this becomes an annual event.

Synod Assembly Theme

Like a Watered Garden: *A theology of water, worship and the world around us*

Speakers: Ben Stewart and Susan Briehl

Anticipated Schedule

Friday

3:30 pm Early Registration at Red Lion
 4:00 pm Gathering Eucharist at Red Lion, Pasco
 6:00 pm Registration at Lord of Life
 Mixer Games
 Dinner
 7:00 pm Welcoming Worship
 7:30 pm Program begins
 9:00 pm All Group Game
 11:00 pm Evening Worship
 11:15 pm Movies
 1:00 pm Lights Out

Saturday

8:00 am Continental Breakfast at Church
 9:00 am Attend Synod Assembly
 11:00 am Attend/Participate in Workshops
 12:30 pm lunch
 1:30 pm Attend Synod Assembly
 3:30 pm Service Projects
 6:00 pm Mall Discovery Tour & Dinner
 10:30 pm Trampoline World
 12:00 am Closing Worship Service
 12:30 am Lights Out

Sunday

8:00 am Continental Breakfast at Church
 Pack up and Clean Up
 9:00 am Next Steps Discussion
 10:30 am Synod Assembly Closing Eucharist

Sleeping Arrangements

We will be sleeping and using as our "home base" Lord of Life in Kennewick. Sleeping bags, mattresses, etc. will be needed.

Agencies We Hope to Work With

2nd Harvest
 Fields of Grace
 Volunteer Chore Services
 Arc of Tri-Cities

These are the Agencies we will work with on Saturday afternoon, offering the sweat of our brow.



Camp Lutherhaven

Many thanks to Camp Lutherhaven of Coeur d'Alene for their assistance in our programming. More information about Lutherhaven will be available from Lutherhaven counselors and staff throughout the weekend or check out their website: www.lutherhaven.com

Financial Considerations

Registration Cost is \$50 per person. It includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch, Sunday breakfast, and snacks for Friday and Saturday night. It includes entrance fees to Trampoline World and all program costs and Synod Assembly fees. Saturday dinner will be on your own at the Columbia Center Mall food court.

Scholarships are available. No one misses out because of lack of funds.

It is the recommendation of the Synod Youth Assembly Team that congregations sponsor their youth and counselor/chaperone/parent because we are taking their attendance as seriously as the Synod Assembly Voting Member. Our Youth Matter!

Synod High School Youth Assembly

Synod Assembly Workshop

On Saturday morning there will be a workshop entitled: “Why Youth are a Part of the Church Today” You, as participants in the Youth Assembly, will help lead this because the adults need to hear from youth!

We want you to start preparing for this by thinking about a few questions:

- 1 – What makes you want to come to church?
- 2 – What is the best part of church?
- 3 - How is God central to your life?
- 4 - What is something new you would like in a church?
- 5 – How can our churches be creative in their work together?

You don’t have to answer ALL of these questions ... but you get the idea. We are asking our youth to think about why they are a part of their ELCA congregation, what they think is GOOD about the church, and what they would like to see improved or “made new”.

You may do this individually or as a group.

It may be done by writing a poem, a rap song, coming up with an objects, or showing pictures, a skit, photos, a power point or any media you want. Get creative! Show us your style!

When we are together, we will see everyone’s work. The best will become part of our workshop. The synod needs to hear from you ... Why are you a part of this church?!?

An inspiration *MIGHT* be a video on the ELCA website called: *We Can Do More Together*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rNkBhGgYZn0

But it is MOST important that you are creative and honest and tell the church why it is that you are a part of your congregation now? And what could make it even better?

We want to hear from you!



Synod High School Youth Assembly

Registration

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants (including adults)

**** Each church will provide their own counselor/chaperone/parent.**

You are responsible for your own youth at all times.

Each church will provide their own transportation, however if this is a problem, indicate so and arrangements will be made.

Church Name:

City/State:

Contact Person:

Email Address:

Phone #:

of High School Youth Participants:

of Adult Participants:

Our group will need help with transportation DURING the event: yes no

Dietary/Special Needs:

Please complete and mail this form, along with registration fee of \$50 per person, to:
(checks payable to Lord of Life Lutheran Church)

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
640 N Columbia Center Blvd
Kennewick, WA 99336

Phone: 509-783-5222
Email: hcryer@thelordoflife.org

Further registration information will be mailed with your confirmation.



Synod High School Youth Assembly

Parochial Reports

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

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>

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>

Mileage Reimbursement Rates Have Changed

The rate is now **57.5¢** per mile.

Mission Intent Forms

Were mailed on January 12

... so that you could have them on hand for your annual meetings.

Please consider your support, and return to the synod office.

If you didn't receive one, please contact us at

509-838-9871 or office@ewaidsynod.org

Progress on the 2015 Synod Assembly in Pasco continues!

Save the Date!

April 24 - 26, 2015 is bound to be a time of faith and learning, planning and singing, voting and togetherness for many of the people of our synod.

This year's theme is

Like a Watered Garden:

A theology of water, worship and the world around us.

Speakers are Rev. Ben Stewart and Rev. Susan Briehl

Once again the Assembly will be held near the waters of the Columbia River at the
Pasco Red Lion Hotel
2525 N. 20th Ave ~ Pasco, WA 99301



Registration Costs

(PER PERSON)

SINGLE OCCUPANCY \$505

RETIRED ROSTERED SINGLE OCCUPANCY \$430

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY \$380

RETIRED ROSTERED DOUBLE OCCUPANCY \$305

COMMUTER \$330

RETIRED ROSTERED COMMUTER \$255

EXTRA NIGHTS HOUSING

are available at \$115 per night or \$58 if double occupancy.

A late fee of \$50 per person will be charged for registrations made after April 7.

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 . . .

Sharon Egertson and family, following the death of her husband, Rev. Mark Egertson.

Rev. Janine Goodrich (American Lutheran - Newport, WA) and the family of Milo Mathison, at the time of his death.

The family of Bev Neraas (Central - Spokane, WA) at the time of her death.

Jon Browder, husband of Sharon Lone-Browder, receiving hospice care.

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

Rev. Regina Herman, on her ordination Sunday, January 18 at Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church, and her call to Mission Developer at New Day Lutheran.

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

For congregations and pastors in call process, may their anxiousness be positive and productive.

For those who suffer loss, may they find hope.

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

For those facing the struggles of aging, may they find the joy of youth.

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

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

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!

New free Mentor Program for members! Monthly e-newsletter! Active Facebook group!

We care deeply about your ministry!

Region 1 contact: Lorie Hughes, Billings, MT (glsmahughes@bresnan.net; 406-656-3552)

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



February 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.ewaidsynod.org/synodpublications.html>.

Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.

Synod Calendar

January 2015

- 23-24 Synod Council - Spokane, WA
- 31 Washington Legislative Conference
at St. Mark's - Spokane, WA2

February 2015

- 6-7 PLU Board of Regents
- 12 Boundary Training - Manito UMC - Spokane, WA
- 16 Presidents' Day - Synod Office Closed
- 20-21 Building Bridges - Pasco First Lutheran
- 24 Assembly Committee Meeting
First Lutheran - Kennewick

March 2015

- 6 2015 Synod Assembly
Resolution and Nomination Deadline
- 8 LCS Fundraiser Lunch - Kennewick, WA

April 2015

- 3 Good Friday - Synod Office Closed



Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our Hands

Staff

- Bishop The Rev. Martin Wells
- Director for Evangelical Missions .. The Rev. Helga Jansons
- Program Administrator Cathy Steiner
- Assembly Manager Karla Olson
- Communication Director Gib Dominguez
- Net-Worker Linda Howell
- Net-Worker The Rev. David Kappus
- Net-Worker Kristin Koskella
- Net-Worker Jim Peterson

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Editor: Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

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How to Avoid the Potholes on the Road to Retirement

Gordon, a pastor in his late sixties, ignored all the warning signs. Despite his waning energy, he believed he was the exception to every retirement rule. The congregation's anxiety grew with each passing year and concerned leaders braced for the brewing crisis. Would the pastor have a medical emergency that suddenly suspended or ended his ministry? Would the church's financial and mission vitality outlast the pastor's "treading water" years? Would the congregation eventually confront Pastor Gordon and force him to exit?¹

Big Potholes for Pastors to Avoid

If the pastor, along with the congregation, prepares for the next chapter, they likely will encounter only a few minor bumps. However, six issues repeatedly pose problems along the way.

1—The hasty or unplanned exit. One of the biggest errors is starting retirement planning too late. Pastor Mark took his first step toward retirement planning at age 50. He participated in a denominational workshop that assessed four aspects of his life linked to a healthy retirement: financial concerns, health issues, spiritual life, and call or vocation. Before addressing the latter three aspects, Pastor Mark reviewed his financial retirement package to identify an age when he could realistically retire without undue hardship. His wife took part in the planning—would she retire before, after, or about the same time? Which options would be financially possible for their family?

Once a timeline for the ideal retirement age is in place, a second assessment process begins about five years before retirement. At this point, pastors should be thinking about a number of things:

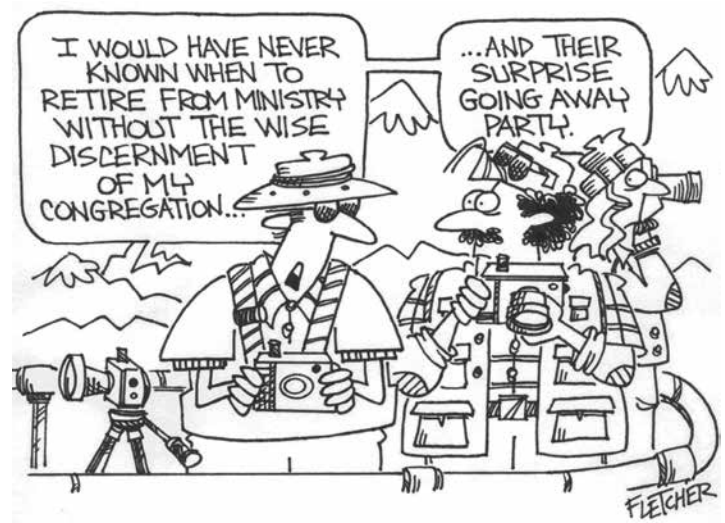
- What is the status of available retirement funds? Are we as a family still on track with our financial planning?
- Are there indications of future medical problems if some lifestyle issues are not addressed?
- What spiritual practices currently nurture my ministry that I want to carry over into retirement?

What kinds of non-church activities, interests, and friendships are being developed?

- What is my sense of call or vocational discernment now? Where do I feel my energies should be focused in the remaining years of my ministry? Where do my gifts and the church's greatest needs intersect?

Answering these questions and having an understanding of what life after work looks like is important to ease the anxiety that comes with retirement. Pastor Mark took his mentor's advice to think of retirement not as quitting but as "answering a new call, with a different income source."² He investigated volunteer opportunities for the causes he deeply cared about. Always avid travelers, he and his wife discussed the long list of places they still wanted to see. He also looked forward to spending more time with family and friends and supporting them in ways he was unable while he was in full-time ministry.

2—The "I'm indispensable" syndrome. One year before retirement a pastor should start thinking of a date when he or she will lead worship for the last time. Pastor Gordon kept postponing making this determination, even to himself, because of his concern for the church's future. He didn't think the



church could afford a full-time pastor after his retirement and worse—the church might close. But his inaction increased those probabilities.

3—*A spouse on the sideline.* Too often a spouse doesn't get to be a part of retirement planning (such as participating in workshops). If the pastor's moves dictated where the family lived, perhaps retirement is a chance for the spouse to set the agenda. Many denominations stipulate that the pastor and spouse join another church immediately upon retirement. This rule can be difficult for the spouse who loses long-term friendships and meaningful church leadership roles. Experience shows that a spouse that remains in the church suffers many awkward moments—hearing all the deserved and undeserved criticism of the new pastor—without being able to respond. In some cases, the family sells their home and relocates to a new community. If the spouse wants to keep working, that option complicates the timing of separation from the church and community.

4—*The lame duck problem.* Generally, lay leaders know the pastor's retirement is coming. In a healthy church, retirement conversations come up in the pastor's annual performance review. Every church situation is different and opinions about "best practices" vary. But the guideline for how far in advance to announce a retirement date is somewhere between three to six months. If the pastor announces earlier than six months, the church stalls because the pastor's ability to lead the flock is compromised.

5—*Unclear communication and boundary issues with the congregation.* The pastor sets the tone for this major transition and his or her attitude is what matters. The pastor should communicate hope and enthusiasm for the church's next chapter. An optimistic message of faith that the congregation will continue to live out their mission in significant ways should come from the pastor. The pastor's retirement gives everyone a time to express thanks for their ministry together and to seek forgiveness for any past conflicts.

One way to insure that everyone gets the retirement news at the same time is a pastoral letter to the congregation (see the NW Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center for an excellent example).³ The pastor is responsible for making clear that the pastoral relationship will end and after the retirement date, he or she can no longer conduct funerals, weddings, and baptisms for former church members.

6—*The grief tsunami.* Despite doing all the right things, Pastor Don was not prepared for the tidal pain that washed over him. Before retirement, his answering machine blinked with multiple mes-

sages each day. But in retirement, the machine light read "zero" day after day. He confessed, "That's how I felt."

A pastor forms deep attachments in ministry and officiates at long-time members' funerals. Retirement then opens up a space for "carried grief"—unacknowledged and unmourned loss.⁴ Another part of the emotional response stems from identity loss. Pastors hold the privilege of being an important part of people's lives. One pastor wrote, "My collar says our conversation could be very important. You can trust me to know that now could be the time for the moment of truth."⁵ Those sacred moments and conversations cease to be central to the pastor's daily life.

How the Congregation Can Help

The pastor and governing board meet to discuss concerns and issues related to the transition. In most cases, the governing board appoints a transition team (this is not the same group as the search committee) shortly after a retirement date is announced. The transition team takes charge of reviewing denominational policies, planning a celebration event and appropriate gifts for the retiring pastor (for example, cash in the form of a love offering helps defray moving expenses), assisting the pastor with housing, and updating members about the process. The church benefits if the governing board chair or key lay leader conducts an exit interview with the pastor.

Every family believes that they are the exception to the policy that prohibits the retired pastor from officiating at weddings and funerals. When the retiring pastor has baptized their daughter, led her confirmation class, and known the parents for decades, the family naturally wants that pastor to officiate at their daughter's wedding too. Nevertheless, an exception request is always awkward for the retired and current pastor. Simply don't ask.

1. Many thanks to the anonymous pastors and leaders who shared their insights and experiences.

2. Marcia Clark Myers, former director of the Office of Vocation, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

3. http://synodresourcecenter.org/admin/personnel/retirement/0001/transition_and_retirement.html

4. Alan Wolfelt, *Living in the Shadow of the Ghosts of Your Grief* (Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2007), 7.

5. Samuel Wells, "Dressed for the Moment," *Christian Century*, November 26, 2014, 33.