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

Moments for Mission

Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.
November 2019

Giving Thanks

by Bishop Richard Jaech, Synod Bishop



Not to one but to many you have called;
Come on the dancing wind
Come from the deepest forest
Come from the highest places
Come from the distant lands
Come from the edge of darkness
Come from the depth of fear
And become the bearer of God.
-Jan Richardson, "Night Visions"

Dear Family in Christ,

The plans and preparations that fill the days of Advent will be coming to fruition in these next days and weeks. Together with our faith communities, our family and friends we will celebrate Christmas in our congregations and in our homes.

At the center of our celebration is the joyous proclamation that God chooses to be near us to bring divine healing and salvation. In Jesus, God entered our chaotic, messy world, in order that we may be rooted and grounded in the rich soil of God's love. Christ continues to make his home in us, as we are shaped by God's word and wisdom, and as we bear fruit for God's beloved world.

One of the ancient names for Mary, the mother of Jesus, is *theotokos*—God-bearer. Rooted and grounded in divine love we, too, are called to bear God to the world—to sing God's praises, proclaim God's faithfulness, and extend divine mercy and forgiveness. The gifts of God's grace are not confined to one season, but are generously shared with us in every season.

As a Synod Staff we give thanks week in and week out for all of the ways that you bear the light of Christ to your communities. You are living signs that the reign of God has broken in on our hurting world. May you be upheld and sustained by God's abiding presence and may the joy and hope of the season be yours.

God's Peace,

Pastor Rebecca Shjerven
Bishop's Associate

Congregations in Transition – December 2019

Lord, we pray for your wisdom, insight and peace for the congregations and the leaders in our synod who are working through a time of pastoral transition. Amen.

Congregations	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
Beautiful Savior, Vancouver	P	C	Pr. Scott Dunfee
Emanuel, Yelm	P	TR	Pulpit Supply
Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma	P	TR	Pr. Linda Milks
Vinland, Poulsbo	P	TR	Pr. Mike Hanson

Mobility position key

P – Pastor

AP – Associate

Pastor

D- Deacon

Mobility status key:

NV – New Vacancy

TR – Transition

I – Interviewing

C – Calling

Calls:

Pastor Linda Milks will serve as Interim Pastor at **Lutheran Church of Christ the King in Tacoma** beginning December 15th.

Susan Dollinger's ordination is 2pm on Sunday, December 15th at Messiah Lutheran, Vancouver WA. Rostered Ministers are invited to vest. The color is red.

On The Road with the Bishop



Nov. 2

Celebrated the Installation of the new Bishop of the Northwest Washington



Synod, Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee, shown left. The ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preached and presided, and all the bishops of the six synods in Region I were there.

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On the Road, continued from page 2

Nov. 7-8 **Attended for the first time the Advisory Board meeting at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. Trevor Sandison, a member of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Olympia, also represents our Synod on the Advisory Board, shown below.**



Nov. 10 **Presided at the Ordination of Sister Ann Schultz, shown below, a deaconess called to serve as Minister of Word and Service at Agnus Dei Lutheran in Gig Harbor, WA. The Ordination took place at United Lutheran, Tacoma, where Pastor Mary Sanders serves.**



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On the Road, continued from page 3

Nov. 12 Visited the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group project at Kennedy Creek near Olympia as part of our Synod's Native American Task Force Sacred

Site visit. Pastor John Rosenberg, *shown left in yellow*, who is actively involved in the recovery project, was our guide.



Nov. 13 Spoke at the Wednesday night Educational Forum, *shown below*, at Mt. View Lutheran in Edgewood, WA, where Pastors John Vaswig and Bri Merkle serve.



Nov. 17 Preached and installed the Synod's ALYVE Board at Creator Lutheran, Bonney Lake, where Pastor Amanda Olson de Castillo began serving on November 1, *shown below*. See page 9 for their names and congregations.



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On the Road, continued from page 4

Nov. 18-21 Joined with six of the newest ministers in our Synod at the First Call Theological Event at Seabeck Conference Center. We were joined by the bishops and 25 new ELCA pastors from Alaska, Washington, Idaho and OR



Shown below, left to right, are our Synod's first call ministers: Pastor John Kim, Duane Fister, Pastor Anna Bonaro, Bishop Jaech, Pastor Jessie McKenzie, Sister Anne Schultz, and Pastor Melissa Johnson.



Nov. 24 Celebrated the 50th anniversary of Galilean Lutheran in Ocean Shores, WA, where Pastor Angela Renecker serves. (Singer Pat Boone attended church here one weekend during a golf tournament, so a cardboard cut-out of Pat attended the luncheon!)



Seeking Partners in Affordable Housing

The Southwestern Washington Synod is exploring whether God is calling us as Lutheran Christians to serve our neighbor and sustain ministry through the development of affordable housing. Affordable housing is a challenge for many households and communities throughout the Southwestern Washington Synod. Many of our congregations are in a position to address a serious need to both help our neighbor and sustain ministry for years to come. At the recommendation of a Synod Sustainability Task Force that met over the past year, the Synod Council recently voted to pursue avenues to support synod congregations in addressing affordable housing. I write to invite you and your congregation to consider if the development of affordable housing is an opportunity to which you are feeling God's call. Our Lutheran tradition is full of calls to serve our neighbor as we live out our baptisms each day.

First, why is affordable housing an issue of concern for churches? Every county in the Southwestern Washington Synod has around 50% (or more) of its families that rent housing, spend at least 50% of their income on housing. Throughout the decade, income has risen around 3%, while rents have risen around 18% (Source: Feb. 2018 report of the Affordable Housing Advisory Board of the Washington State Government). This puts hundreds of households under significant stress which we see in our congregational ministries as people struggle to keep a roof over their heads.

Second, numerous congregations in the synod have land that could be used for affordable housing. Some congregations have already explored this opportunity. Our neighbors in the Northwest Washington Synod are involved in affordable housing projects. Congregations may wonder if this opportunity is right for them. There are many variables for congregations to consider including land availability, mission of the congregation, the need for social services that the congregation is equipped to provide, among others.

Third, affordable housing ministries utilize different skill sets that can help empower congregational and synod ministry. In order for the synod to explore and support this ministry opportunity, we need the gifts and skills of specialists in housing, law, accounting, and social service providers. If you know of people in your congregation who have a passion or expertise that they would be willing to share toward this effort, please nominate them to a developing "Affordable Housing Team" for which we are seeking partners.

We have access to grant opportunities and a Holy Spirit enthusiasm in some of our congregations that cannot be ignored, especially when the need for affordable housing among our neighbors is so great.

What can you do? Does your congregation have a location or land that is viable for affordable housing? What are resources available? Please ask questions. If you know that you can contribute in any way, please contact Pastor Melanie Wallschlaeger, our Synod Director for Evangelical Mission at 253-535-8300 or Melanie.wallschlaeger@elca.org. Please pray that we as Christians can be present and helpful to our neighbors in need.

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Affordable Housing, continued from page 6

If you would like a closer look at the Affordable Housing Advisory Board with the Washington State Department of Commerce report referenced in this article, go to:

https://app.leg.wa.gov/ReportsToTheLegislature/Home/GetPDF?fileName=Commerce-AHAB-annual-report-2018_0fe5c4e4-7c44-4032-845e-9cf53a41d18b.pdf

Young Adults in Global Mission

The ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Program is now in its 20th year of existence! The YAGM Program sends young adults ages 21 – 29 – the ELCA's youngest missionaries! – into a year of global mission service in the spirit of accompaniment; walking alongside our global companions in a manner that practices mutuality, interdependence and solidarity. This program invites volunteers to become the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, providing critical support to ministries and projects in communities of need. It also invites volunteers into a journey of self-reflection, providing space to consider their sense of identity, God's work in the world, and their place within it all.

This year, four of the 65 currently serving YAGM volunteers have roots in the Southwestern Washington Synod! Emily Shane, serving in the United Kingdom, is a member of First Lutheran in Poulsbo, where her parents are pastors, and a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University. Jackie Stenburg is also a graduate of PLU and is currently serving in Rwanda. Baptized at Trinity Lutheran in Tacoma, Kara Barkman is a current member of Faith Lutheran in Shelton and a graduate of PLU. She is currently serving in Mexico. Finally, Zach Croonquist, serving in Central Europe, was a summer intern at Messiah Lutheran in Vancouver. Please hold these young adults in prayer as they serve across the world!

There are a number of different ways that you and your congregation can support Young Adults in Global Mission: by naming ELCA YAGM volunteers in your prayers, connecting with their stories through the YAGM Facebook page, and considering forming a covenant of sponsorship and communication with a currently serving YAGM.

On average, it costs \$15,000 to send a young adult into service. Each volunteer commits to fundraising \$5,000 towards their year of service, while other generous contributors provide the additional \$10,000 towards program costs. Additionally, all YAGMs write newsletters during their year of service and many are eager to share their experiences with congregations through blogs, newsletter articles, Skype, or recorded messages!

Another exciting opportunity for connection with YAGM is through the new Youth for YAGM initiative. This initiative connects youth groups of all ages to a currently serving volunteer through a mini-sponsorship covenant. By connecting Youth to YAGMs, youth groups have the opportunity to learn more about the world and the church's place in it, educate their congregation about the global church, connect to an older young adult peer mentor in the church, and discover opportunities for global service later in their lives! *Continued next page*

Young Adults in Global Mission, continued from page 7

Finally, Hannah Johnsrud, member of Mountain View Lutheran Church in Edgewood, has recently returned from her YAGM year in Jerusalem and the West Bank and has extended her service to work as a Mission Funding Interpreter for the ELCA. In this role, she seeks to bring to life the work of the ELCA's many ministries, with a particular eye to the YAGM Program, through stories, images, and conversation. While she no longer has availability on Sunday mornings to meet with congregations, Hannah would love to join small group and bible studies or to share (through adult education sessions, temple talks, or preaching) at midweek or evening worship services! Her term of service officially ends in January 2020. Please email Hannah directly at Hannah.johnsrud@elca.org if you are interested in having her visit you or your congregation.

Your 2019-2020 Synod ALYVE Board (Associate Lutheran Youth in Various Endeavors)

- Miranda Morgan, President (Creator, Bonney Lake)
- Izaiah Jones, Vice President (Beautiful Savior, Vancouver)
- Caroline Slocum, Secretary (Peninsula Lutheran, Gig Harbor)
- Kayla Newman, Inclusivity Director (Spanaway Lutheran)
- Neci Thompson, Social Media Director (Beautiful Savior, Vancouver)
- Jonathan Hurley (Creator, Bonney Lake)
- Paige Winsor (Creator, Bonney Lake)
- Maiya Waterstraat (Pilgrim, Puyallup)
- Sara Heineman (Creator, Bonney Lake)
- Autumn McPherson-Ward (Good Shepherd, Olympia)

These students, along with their co-Adult Advisors Shannon Fleischfresser from Pilgrim Lutheran in Puyallup and Kirsten Larsen from Beautiful Savior Lutheran, Vancouver WA, are currently planning the Synod Youth Gathering coming up March 6-8, 2020 at Camp Arnold in Eatonville. Register online through the Synod Youth Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swwasynodyouth/events/> or on Google docs: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeDhYwleOPTw_nJsguun2GlpMEz4Axr8aGIMfb2fsBiiijGNA/viewform See their picture in the On the Road with Bishop Jaech on page 4 above.

Lutheran Summer Music for High School students

Lutheran Summer Music is a faith-based music academy for high school students. They are accepting students. The academy is June 28th – July 26th at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN. www.ismacademy.org/about. The students from our synod performed at our 2017 Synod Assembly worship at PLU and did an outstanding job!

Namibia Task Force

Nov. 27, 2019

Dear friends of Namibia,

Blessings to you on behalf of the Namibia Task Force of the Southwestern Washington Synod.

As supporters in prayer of our synod's companion relationship with the three Lutheran church bodies in Namibia, we thank you.

We ask for renewed prayer as we plan to send a group to the 2020 Southern Africa Consultation this coming May in Johannesburg, South Africa. We will meet not only with Lutheran leaders from Namibia, but also with those from eight other southern Africa counties with ELCA companion relationships. With the theme of "A Journey of Reconciliation," we will approach our individual companion relationships from a new, regional perspective.

From the consultation, the ELCA Global Mission Office will lead some of us into Namibia, where we will greet our companions, worship with them, and journey together in Christ.

If you are interested in more, please contact me. This is a very unique and historic time for our companion relationship, and we want to make sure you know you're invited.

If you wish to made a contribution, please make your checks out to the Southwestern Washington Synod, and mail them to the synod office at 420 121st St. S, Tacoma, WA 98444. Please put "Namibia" in the memo line. Your gifts will be sent on to our Namibian companion churches at Christmas. In the north, they will be used for a hospital, rehabilitation center and school. In the south, they will be used to support children's hostels.

As always, we are available to conduct an adult-education time or temple talk at your congregation. Please invite us.

Thank you,
Rachel Pritchett, Synod Namibia Task Force Chair
rachelpritchett@msn.com, 206-498-0920

Free Volunteer Sign-up program

If you have ever recruited and organized volunteers for an event or activity, you know the challenges that a volunteer coordinator faces. One of those challenges is recruiting volunteers to do specific tasks; another challenge is matching them up with a job or a task that they want to do. And if you are doing this through back-and-forth emails, phone calls, and voice mail, it can become a nightmare. There may be a better way.

If your ministry has the email addresses of its members, one effective approach is to use [VolunteerSignup.org](https://volunteersignup.org) to create a free, online, interactive volunteer sign up sheet that lists tasks for volunteers, and provide the sign up sheet's link (via email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to your
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Volunteer program continued from page 9

potential volunteers so that they can select what they want to do themselves. It is like passing around a clipboard with a sign up sheet, except it is all done smoothly online. Online sign up is quick and convenient, and saves time.

Ideas for use: Sunday morning ushering, serving community meals, coffee hour servers and snack providers, Sunday School teachers—any other programs that you schedule volunteers for.

Congregation News

Blue Christmas Worship Services

This season of joy is not always joyous for everyone. Blue Christmas, held on the longest night of the year, is a special service designed for those for whom The holidays might be difficult. If you have undergone a loss of life change, or may be struggling with grief, sadness or depression, you are invited to the special time of music, worship and encouragement. Service in this synod are listed alphabetically by congregation first name.

Church	City	Day	Date	Time
Agnus Dei Lutheran	Gig Harbor	Saturday	December 21st	7pm
Beautiful Savior Lutheran	Vancouver	Sunday	December 15th	4:30pm
Bethel Lutheran	Brush Prairie	Saturday	December 21st	7pm "Longest Night Service"
Faith Lutheran	Shelton	Wednesday	December 18th	1pm and 6pm Worship following by "Surviving the Holidays" workshop (A GriefShare rsc)
Family of Grace	Auburn	Thursday	December 19th	7pm
First Lutheran	Poulsbo	Saturday	December 21st	10am-6pm Drop-in "Space of Hope and Comfort"
First Lutheran Community	Port Orchard	Sunday	1 st and 3 rd Sunday of each month for	11:30am-1pm Bereavement Support Group
Immanuel Lutheran	Vancouver	Thursday	December 19th	12 Noon and 6:30pm
Messiah Lutheran	Vancouver	Tuesday	December 17th	7pm "Comfort and Hope Service"
Ocean Park Lutheran Church	Ocean Park	Saturday	December 21st	6:30pm
Saron Lutheran/First Presbyterian	Hoquiam	Sunday	December 22nd	5pm
Silverdale Lutheran	Silverdale	Saturday	December 21st	5pm
St Christopher's Community	Olympia	Wednesday	December 18th	7pm
St Mark's Lutheran Church by the Narrows	Tacoma	Wednesday	December 18th	7:30pm (as part of Evensong service)

Congregation news, continued from page 10

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Port Angeles is hosting guest organist Cheryl Will for an Advent Lessons and Carols service, December 22, 2019 at 9:30am. Cheryl is a daughter of the late Rev. Carl Fischer, who pastored (and played the organ for) Holy Trinity for many years before his retirement. All are welcome to this festive service of readings, carols, and communion.

Pastor John Stroeh of **Peace Lutheran, Tacoma** is presenting at the Joint Declaration to Address Homelessness Signing Ceremony on Thursday, December 12th from 5-7pm at Oasis of Hope Center (1937 S G St, Tacoma). Peace Lutheran Church owns 3 homes used for affordable housing. This event is put on by Associate Ministries in Pierce County.

The annual Run for Faith hosted by Faith Lutheran in Elma will be held on Saturday, January 11th and 10am. 5K or 10K run. plus 1/2 mile kids' run Location: 1260 Monte-Elma Road, Elma, WA 98541 cost: \$30, includes beanie hat & lots of post-race goodies, as well as random prizes, including homemade pies & other treats. Age group ribbons & trophies for overall winners. Mostly flat courses on rural and small-town roads, part of 10K is on trails. Proceeds go to local food banks.

Congregations, please remember to send your annual reports to the synod office at swwsynod@plu.edu or mail. Thank you!

A blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas to you all!

May God fill your life with love, joy and peace this Holiday Season and throughout the New Year,

From your Synod staff-Bishop Rick Jaech, Pastor Rebecca Shjerven (Bishop's Associate), Pastor Melanie Wallschlaeger (Director for Evangelical Mission- ELCA deployed staff) and Allison Ramsey (administration and events)