

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 2016

Staff

Bishop Richard E. Jaech

Rev. Kim Latterell
bishop's associate

Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger
director for
evangelical mission
(ELCA staff)

Allison Ramsey
office manager

Phone
(253) 535-8300

Address
420 121st St. S
Tacoma, WA 98444

E-mail
swwsynod@plu.edu

Blog
<http://swwsynodelca.blogspot.com>

Websites
www.lutheranssw.org
www.elca.org

Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Southwestern-Washington-Synod/1290477871337786>

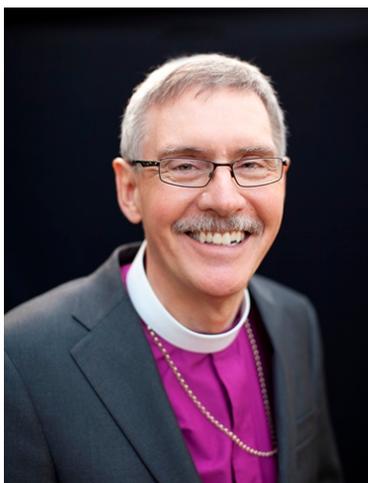
Twitter
@SWWASynod



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

Reformation Studies

by Bishop Richard Jaech



Dear Friends in Christ,

Since we are approaching the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, I decided that this would be a good time to do some new reading about Martin Luther in order to refresh my appreciation of what happened in 1517. The three books that I have read so far, all of which were excellent and helpful, are listed below.

The gifts of the Reformation are many, but as I write this newsletter just two weeks before

Election Day in the United States, I find myself thinking about Luther's perspective on government and being a citizen. It's important to notice that Luther's views about being a citizen spring out of his then-revolutionary affirmation of "the priesthood of all believers". In Luther's day, people were viewed as having lives of meaning and worth only if they were "close" to God because of their righteous, spiritual work (nuns, priests and popes), or because they had high social ranking and power (princes, bankers and emperors.) In his reading of St. Paul and the Gospels, Luther re-discovered that we are all equally valued and cherished by God, not because of what we do or who we are socially, but because God unconditionally loves and prizes each one of us. Luther then went on to say that, just as we are all equally loved by God, so we are also given lives of equal meaning and purpose. From the first moment of our baptism, we all become priests, called and empowered to serve and care for others as God has cared for us.

The exact form of our priesthood depends on the context of our lives and what we are specifically called to do. Luther used the term "office" to describe the different vocations we take on. We might use the term "role". We live out our priestly faith and love in the variety of offices and roles we play in our lives: parent, school-teacher, farmer, nurse, pastor. And, yes, the

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“office” of both citizen and government leader are among the roles that Luther identifies as part of God’s royal priesthood.

Luther was still very much shaped by the sixteenth century society around him that was just emerging from feudalism. Therefore, he did not leap immediately into full-scale democracy. However, the rights and duties that he proposes for common people and their government leaders are quite stunning. As cities in Germany became “Lutheran”, they welcomed advice from Luther about how to re-form their government structures so that they would better reflect God’s equal, life-changing love. In response, and for the first time in Europe’s history, Luther mobilized local governments to: (1) Establish and financially support free schools open to all boys and girls. (2) Establish a social assistance program that would provide material help to people in crisis (widows, the ill, the unemployed.) This welfare program or “community chest” would be equally administered by a balanced leadership group of two nobles, two city council leaders, three town citizens and three peasant farmers. Democracy was truly emerging out of Luther’s re-discovery of the priesthood of all believers! The office of “citizen” became a holy calling! (For much more information about this, see Dr. Torvend’s book listed below)

There is obviously much more to explore about Luther, but I want to return to the issue that led me to think about his perspectives on citizenship, namely our national and local elections coming up. This year, more than any I can remember, it is easy to feel cynical about the election process and the caustic campaigning that has taken place. Many Americans are questioning whether they will even vote and many others wonder about the future health of our country.

In the face of that turmoil, reading Luther has encouraged me to see again how the office of being a citizen is part of our priesthood as God’s people. It’s true that American democracy is still an experiment in the process of being developed. We groan at its limits and imperfections. However, being an active citizen is a holy calling. In the same way that parents care for children, God is working through us as citizens to care for our nation and the world and to bring grace, blessing, and justice to all.

So, Luther would say to us, VOTE! Tell everybody you know to vote! The election of leaders is, of course, an important part of democracy. By their skill, values and vision, leaders guide and shape our nation, cities and states. Therefore, it’s good that we spend time debating and voting on who will lead us.

However, we make a big mistake if we think that our leaders are going to figure everything out and fix everything by themselves. The world is way too complicated for any one leader to have all the answers and solve every dilemma. Democracy only succeeds when we citizens stay involved in discussion, planning and action as each new challenge is faced. Fair, collaborative decision-making is an on-going element of democracy that we are still learning to use.

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Finally, after the elections take place, we will also have an important ministry of healing and reconciliation to do. So much anger, bitterness and violence has been unleashed during the past two years. Therefore, our ministry as citizens must include bringing people together and rebuilding a sense of community, even as we make complicated decisions as a nation.

So there you are. Just as the TV commentators are constantly talking about the election, I couldn't help but offer some of my thoughts (and Luther's) as well. However, I primarily want to urge you to engage in the gift of democracy and the office of citizen that God has granted to us. May God bless and guide us as we enter a new four-year chapter in our journey together as a nation!

Bishop Rick Jaech

P.S. Here are the books I have enjoyed recently: Timothy Lull and Derek Nelson, *Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther* (Fortress Press); Carter Lindberg and Paul Wee, editors, *The Forgotten Luther: Reclaiming the Social-Economic Dimension of the Reformation* (Lutheran University Press); Samuel Torvend, *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*, (Fortress Press).

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On the Road with the Bishop

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September 28 – October 4 Attending the ELCA Conference of Bishops Fall meeting in Chicago, *below*.



October 10- 12 Visiting seminarians at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA, *below*



On the Road, Continued from page 4

October 15 Attending our Synod's Women of the ELCA Fall Event at Immanuel Lutheran, Centralia, pictured below with two officers of our Synodical Women's Organization.



October 15 Worshipping with Pastor Annie Jones-Barnes and the members of our mission start Rock City in Tacoma, below left.



October 16 Preaching at Celebration Lutheran, Puyallup, below right



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October 20 Enjoying a great conversation and lunch with retired pastors in the Tacoma area, held at Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community, *below*



October 22 Invited to be a guest speaker at the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia (which covers all of Western Washington). Members of our Federated Lutheran/Episcopal congregation in Olympia, St. Christopher Community Church, were there, with Father James Thibodeaux, *below*.



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On the Road, Continued from page 6

October 24 Officiating at the Ordination of Pastor John Kim, our new pastor at Gloria Dei, Tacoma. Pastor Kim attended seminary and did his internship in Atlanta, GA, where the Ordination took place, *below*.



October 30 Preaching on Reformation Sunday at Hope Lutheran, Enumclaw, where Pastor Keith Marshall serves.



I Was a Stranger

By ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... (Matthew 25:35).



Today there are more than 60 million displaced people in the world, more than at any time since World War II. From Syria, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Somalia, Afghanistan and Colombia, people are fleeing for their lives from war, famine, gang violence, crushing poverty, drought and floods. Parents make the wrenching choice to send their children away with the hope that the possibility of a better life in a new country outweighs the violence of their home countries and the perils of the journey.

It seems the whole world is on the move.

Migration has been part of the story of the people of God from the beginning. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, and God sent Abram and Sarai from their homeland to a new land. Joseph's brothers and father were refugees in Egypt. Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after God liberated them from oppression and infanticide. The people of God suffered bitter exile in Babylon after they were forced from Judah by war and ethnic cleansing.

The memory of migration, forced exile, of being the stranger stayed with the people of God through the centuries and became part of their confession of faith: "... you shall make this response before the Lord your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien ...' (Deuteronomy 26:5).

The experience of God's people compelled Israel to give special care to the stranger. "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Jesus also experienced forced migration. We read in Matthew 2:13-15 that the holy family fled for their lives from Israel into Egypt. And during the years of his earthly ministry Jesus had no permanent home. "And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head' " (Matthew 8:20).

Our Lord not only commended us to welcome the stranger, Jesus made it clear that when we welcome the stranger we welcome him.

Lately in our country there is a lot of anxiety about migrants and strangers. They are too often portrayed as a threat. They are the others. They need to be monitored. They don't belong here. This is *our* home. This is *our* country. We belong here.

When we look at the world in this way it isn't possible to see that we, too, are on a journey; we, *continued next page*

I was a Stranger, continued from page 8

too, were once no people; we, too, are only passing through. The author of Hebrews recounting the history of salvation makes this clear when speaking about our ancestors in faith:

“All these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:13-16).

We don't have a continuing home on earth. We are all migrants. Let us welcome the stranger, seeing him or her as a fellow traveler, a companion on the way.

And here's a song for the road:

*I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey;
but courage will come with the sound
of your steps by my side.
And with all of the family you saved by your love,
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey
(Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 808).*

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

Congregations in Transition

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

Mobility-November 2016

Congregations in Call Process	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
Bethany, Spanaway	P	TR	Janeen Smith, AIM
Bethel, Brush Prairie	P	I	Joe Aalbue
Salishan Eastside Mission	P	TR	Lauren Vignec
Stella Chapel, Vancouver	P	TR	Elten Zerby
St. Paul, Vancouver	P	TR	Skip Getman
Vinland, Poulsbo	P	TR	Sigi Helgeson & Marty Dasler

Mobility position key

*P – Pastor
AP – Associate Pastor
AIM – Associate in Ministry
DM – Diaconal Minister
DC – Deaconess*

Mobility status key:

*NV – New Vacancy
TR – Transition
I – Interviewing
C – Calling*

Installation

Rev. Dale Larson will be installed as Pastor of First Lutheran, South Bend on November 6th.

Global Mission

Prayers for Standing Rock

By Bishop Kirby Unti, Northwest Washington Synod, was at Standing Rock last week with an ELCA delegation, praying with the Standing Rock supporters.

My heart breaks to see the pictures of armed police in riot gear dispersing the peaceful protesters who positioned themselves on the land that separates the Missouri River from the Dakota Pipeline. It is the very ground I stood on yesterday and joined hands with nearly 100 tribal members and water protectors to offer up words of prayer for peace and the care of the river.

There are two distinct narratives taking place at Standing Rock. One is that it is a dangerous gathering of militants who are planning to use whatever means necessary to stop the pipeline from progressing. The other is it is a peaceful gathering that has drawn more than 320 tribes from around the world along with faith leaders and environmentalists who share a common desire to support the Sioux community who believe their sacred sites are being desecrated and the future of their water source is being put at great risk.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addressed the camp, below.



I must tell you I experienced nothing of the first narrative. What I did experience was the gratitude of the Standing Rock people that a faith delegation had come to stand alongside them to pray for peace. When our prayer circle broke there were several tribal members who embraced me with tears running down their faces.

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Standing Rock, continued from page 11

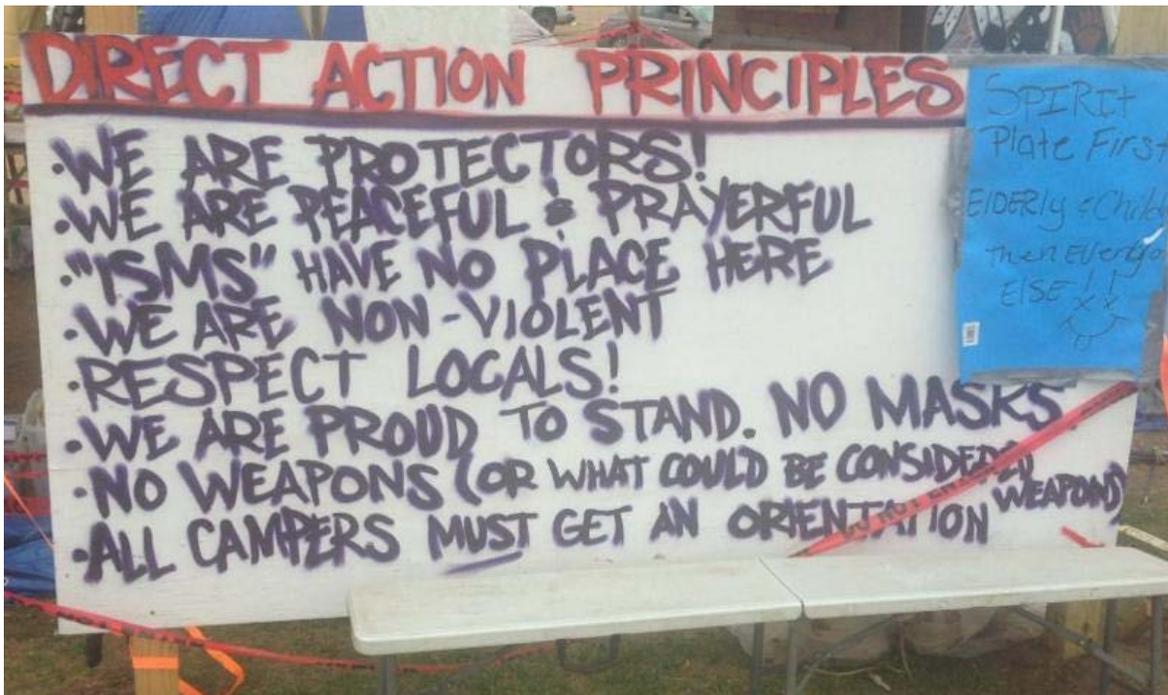
I can assure you that even if the pipeline goes through, this story is not finished. I see this as a kairos moment in which to open a wider conversation of how we treat our indigenous brothers and sisters and how we care for our sacred earth and waters.

Please keep all involved in Standing Rock in your prayers!

Photo of flags of tribes and agencies supporting the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, below



Sign at entrance of Standing Rock. below



Namibia Visitor to Synod Dies

Leonard De Vries, director of finance for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, died Sept. 22 in Namibia of apparent heart failure.

De Vries accompanied ELCRN Bishop Ernst Gamxamub last spring in a visit to the Southwestern Washington Synod and three other synods that are part of the ELCA companion relationship with Namibia.

During their visit, Bishop Rick Jaech and his staff, members of the synod's Namibia Task Force and volunteers showed their Namibian guests much of the Puget Sound region. In return, Bishop Ernst and De Vries shared their story of Lutherans in Namibia with many. "We're deeply saddened at the passing our our dear new friend. Our companion relationship with his church will continue, and we'll remember this kind man, always ready with a smile, joke or song," said Rachel Pritchett, chair of the synod's Namibia Task Force.



Photo, above right: Stephanie Armstrong of Elim Lutheran Church of Port Orchard and a member of the Namibia Task Force, talks with Leonard De Vries, director of finance for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, last spring at a synod global-mission event in Olympia. Photo credit, Rachel Pritchett

Jackets from Julia

Julia Sandusky is an artist. She is a community activist, a Girl Scout, a daughter, a sister, a Lutheran...and she's just 9 years old.

While Julia Sandusky was recovering from cataract surgery last year, at the age of 8, she heard a Sleep Country (now Sleep Train) radio ad about providing coats for foster children. Julia told her mother, Kim, that she was going to start collecting coats for foster kids. Kim is an elementary school teacher with the Clover Park School District and knew that this may have just been a temporary interest.

However, Julia kept telling her mom and dad, Jason, that she was collecting coats. She even went so far as to set a goal of collecting 20 coats. Kim went to her husband at this point and said, "I guess we should pay attention; it looks like this may actually be a thing!" Thus, "Jackets from Julia" was born.

Julia was asked to present the idea to her church, Mount Cross Lutheran in University Place, just west of Tacoma. In her typical soft voice, Julia told her congregation that she was

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Jackets from Julia, continued from page 12

collecting coats for foster children and would bring them to Sleep Train. Her Pastor, JT Burk, said that this was Julia's ministry, but the congregation members supported it by donating 63 coats to Jackets from Julia last year. Julia ended up donating a total of 86 coats to Sleep Train last year.

This year, Julia's goal was 125 coats! This week she announced on her Facebook page, Jackets for Julia, that she has collected over 210 coats and raised more than \$500. They will use the money to purchase more new coats. Often, when Julia and her mother (shown right with Allison Ramsey, newsletter editor) post information on her Facebook page, they end the post with "Kindness is contagious."

Julia gets coats donated by people at her church, her Girl Scout troop, her brother's Boy Scout Troop and by auctioning off adorable small paintings on her Facebook page, Jackets from Julia, to buy more coats to donate. Julia said that she loves painting the pictures. Kindness is contagious!

Julia and her family are very thankful for the love (& coats) that they receive from their church, Mt. Cross Lutheran. Every month when they go to Julia's medical appointments at Children's Hospital in Seattle, their church members deliver a dinner for their whole family. Kim said that this really helps them during those busy days. Kindness is contagious!



If you would like to donate coats for foster children, you may send them to Jackets from Julia c/o Mount Cross Lutheran Church, 8902 40th St W, University Place, WA 98466.

If you know of other Lutheran youth who do great service in their communities, please let Allison Ramsey know. We'd love to continue these types of articles about awesome youth. Allison's email is swwsynod@plu.edu and phone 253-535-8300.

Camp Lutherwood Turns 70

Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center in Bellingham, the year-round outdoor ministry is celebrating their 70th anniversary! The Camp is located along the north shore of Lake Samish about 10 miles South of Bellingham, Washington. They have a fundraising auction scheduled for November 19th at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Everett to celebrate their ministry moving forward. More information and registration for event [here](http://www.camplutherwood.org/auction/).

<http://www.camplutherwood.org/auction/>

Lutheran Men in Mission Conference

BOLD GATHERING

July 21-21, 2017 in Minneapolis, MN

The BOLD GATHERING is a weekend for men to come together to learn, to worship, to network, and be equipped to BOLDLY live out their faith!

Every couple of years, men from all over the country gather together for a weekend huddle that is called the BOLD GATHERING!

In 2017, join us in Minneapolis to be encouraged, to worship, and to connect and serve!

Hundreds of us will be gathering in the [Minneapolis Marriott City Center](#) to celebrate being bold daring followers of Jesus Christ!

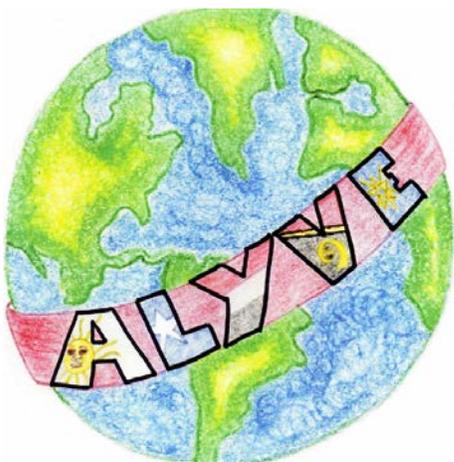
The [Lutheran Men in Mission Business Meeting](#) is the pre-conference event that starts on Thursday.

Synod Youth

Save the Date!

The annual SWWA Synod Youth Gathering will be held
February 3-5, 2017
at Camp Arnold in Eatonville, Washington.

Church Leaders: Invite your 6th-12th Graders and encourage them to bring friends!



We will have games, devotions, Zip Line, Human Foosball, Canoeing, crafts, and SO MUCH MORE! Cost will be about \$120 per person. This retreat is planned and led by our wonderful ALYVE (Associated Lutheran Youth in Various Endeavors) board.

Your students in 8-12 grade will have an opportunity to learn more about the ALYVE board and how they can become student leaders at the gathering. More info soon.

Our Congregations (news and neat ideas from our synod congregations)

Save the Date! Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood is presenting a conference on Saturday, July 29, 2017 about the challenges of being Christ to the world in 21st century America.

The list of distinguished speakers will be **Andrew Root, PhD** (Associate Professor and Carrie Olson Baalson Chair of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN), **Shane Claiborne** (Founder of The Simple Way community), **Pastor Leonor Ortega** (Pastor and musician with Five Iron Frenzy Christian music band, Denver CO), and **Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley** (Distinguished Professor of Faith and Culture and Director of Intercultural and Indigenous Studies at George Fox Evangelical Seminary). Registration information coming soon.

“Canstruction” - Saturday, November 19 **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Olympia** is having a Hunger Awareness & Education Event and Service Project. They are collecting food for the Food Bank, but before delivering it, they will be learning about hunger in their community and build temporary structures from all of the canned food they collect.



Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 6th—Don't forget to roll-back those clocks one hour when you go to bed Saturday night. Mark your calendars for the time change, or you will be an hour early for church!



Calendar

January 22-24, 2017- Prayer Retreat for Rostered Leaders at Seabeck Conference Center in Seabeck. Theme: Wellness Reformaton (Sunday 5pm – Tuesday 10am)

January 24-25, 2017 Bishop's Convocation for Rostered Leaders at Seabeck Conf Center in Seabeck Theme: Reformation (Tuesday 10am - Wednesday 5pm)

June 16-17, 2017 -Synod Assembly, at PLU, Tacoma

July 29, 2017- Ministry conference at Mountain View, Edgewood

August 7-10, 2017 -ELCA Rostered Leaders Gathering in Atlanta Georgia “On the Way Together” (Begins Monday evening at 5pm and will end on Thursday by noon.)

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