



Eastern Washington-Idaho

Synod supplement

## A time away

Family's sabbatical —  
time of service, growth

By John McQuaig

**A**nnie Dillard said, “The way we spend our days is the way we spend our lives.”

How do we spend our days? How can we change the patterns that have developed? What is God doing in the world? How could we challenge our limited worldview? How do we change our days—and in doing so, change our lives?

One of the options is to take a sabbatical. From Sabbath—Latin *sabbaticus* and the Hebrew *shabbathon*—a sabbatical is a rest from work, a hiatus.

The concept of sabbatical is introduced in Leviticus 25 with a commandment to stop working the fields in the seventh year. It turns out this was good for both the farmer and the land. We have come to understand that “resting” the field or leaving it fallow every few years revitalizes the nutrients in the soil and greatly increases the future harvests. This might be good for humans too.

We probably would have continued to spend our days in the same way until my wife, Melanie, called my bluff more than three years ago: “You know, the best year for the girls to miss school for a sabbatical would be 2008-2009. Gwen will be in second grade and Marit seventh, neither in transition.”

Three years of planning should make it doable, so I agreed.

The opportunity to do some longer-term Christian mission work somewhere in the world was important for us. Both Melanie and I had been on mission trips up to two weeks long. We hoped to be able to commit to a longer-term opportunity.

The ELCA Global Mission Web site ([www.elca.org/globalserve](http://www.elca.org/globalserve)) attempts to align volunteers with service opportunities. LCC International University ([www.lcc.lt](http://www.lcc.lt)) in Klaipeda, Lithuania, emerged as a good match.

Lithuania gained its freedom from the Soviet Union in August 1991 after several tense months of independent actions by Lithuania and an attempt by the faltering USSR to regain control of the nation. Independent elections were held in 1993, and Lithuania has been a democracy since. It has a vibrant economy that has been growing at 12 percent.

Klaipeda is a beautiful port city with a population of 250,000. It sits at the mouth of a 34-mile long inlet that empties into the Baltic Sea. It is the northernmost ice-free harbor in Eastern Europe and has long been a



**The McQuaig family visits the Hill of Crosses in northern Lithuania.**

strategic port for the Russian empire. All manner of goods are transported in and out of Eastern Europe from this port.

The mission of LCC International University is: “To engage students in a transforming educational experience in order to create a generation of leaders for Eastern Europe who think critically, promote democratic ideals, develop a market economy, and rebuild the network of civil society within the context of a Christian worldview.”

The university enrolls about 750 students, half from Lithuania and the others from 21 countries including Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Most share a similar history of fairly recent liberation from the Soviet system.

Having spent years serving as a certified public accountant for many

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# Eastern Washington-Idaho

## Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod directory

### Contact information

314 S. Spruce Street, Suite A  
Spokane, WA 99201-5823  
509/838-9871 - phone  
509/838-0941 – FAX  
[www.ewaidssynod.org](http://www.ewaidssynod.org)

### Guiding principles

JESUS: First, Last, Always  
GRATITUDE; gratitude  
No Fear! TRANSFORMATION  
Miracles of HOPE!  
YES! Everybody Come!  
Come, Lord JESUS

### Who

105 congregations  
34,432 members  
12 clusters  
179 ordained ministers  
16 lay rostered leaders  
28 synod council members  
4 synod office staff  
1 very large congregation (1,500+)  
4 large congregations (951-1,499)  
6 moderately large congregations (701-950)  
7 medium congregations (501-700)  
13 moderately small congregations (351-500)  
32 small congregations (176-350)  
41 very small congregations (1-175)  
1 forming

### What

Total 2007 contributions: \$20,290,832  
Average per confirmed member: \$697  
Average worship attendance: 102  
2007 ELCA support: \$980,478  
2007 World Hunger Appeal Support: \$65,317

### Where

650 miles from Leavenworth, Wash., to Jackson Hole, Wyo.  
One of six synods in ELCA Region 1.  
The other synods are Alaska, Northwest Washington, Southwestern Washington,

Oregon and Montana.

More than 50 percent rural congregations.  
Four primary urban centers:  
• Yakima/Ellensburg  
• Spokane/Coeur d'Alene  
• Boise  
• Tri-Cities

### Synod staff

**Bishop:** Rev. Martin Wells,  
[mstmwells@aol.com](mailto:mstmwells@aol.com)

**Assistant to the bishop:** Rev. Mark Nelson, [nelsonrevmark@msn.com](mailto:nelsonrevmark@msn.com)

**Office administrator:** Laurel Eschenbacher, [office@ewaidssynod.org](mailto:office@ewaidssynod.org)

**Program administrator:** Cathy Steiner, [office@ewaidssynod.org](mailto:office@ewaidssynod.org)

### Synod council

**Synod vice president:** Susan Berg, [sberg@trinitypullman.org](mailto:sberg@trinitypullman.org). Chairs synod council and synod assemblies. She also participates in synod policy-making and committees.

**Synod treasurer:** Tami McHugh, [tamimchugh@msn.com](mailto:tamimchugh@msn.com). Oversees synod financial matters and works with Region 1 Financial Services to transfer funds to churchwide ministries and synod committees and organizations.

**Synod secretary:** Marilyn Rounds, [goodshepoffice@qwestoffice.net](mailto:goodshepoffice@qwestoffice.net). Records and reports synod activities to the council and assemblies. Synod records are open to members of the synod and are available from the synod office.

### Synod committees

Much of the synod's work is carried out by its members through commit-

tees. Some serve rostered leaders, others serve congregations and their ministries. Committee members are appointed by the bishop and the synod council.

If your congregation needs help in a particular area, contact the synod office and the staff will put you in touch with the appropriate committee or another resource. If you want to put your talents to work by serving on a synod committee, talk to your pastor about getting involved.

The committees are:

- Candidacy
- Communications
- Congregational Life
- Congregation Constitution Review Task Force
- Synod Constitution Review Task Force
- Consultation
- Discipline
- Finance
- Global Mission
- Licensed Lay Ministry Task Force
- Nominating
- Outreach
- Policy
- Professional Ministry
- Reference and Counsel
- Rural Ministry Partners
- Social Ministry
- Youth

### Companion Synod

#### Ulanga Kilombero Diocese in Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has more than 2.5 million members and is one of the largest Lutheran churches in the world.

Two major concerns of the ELCT are health care and education. The church has 21 hospitals and numerous dispensaries, as well as schools and programs providing both secondary and theological education.

## ELCA Partner Synod

Greater Milwaukee Synod, [www.milwaukeeesynd.org](http://www.milwaukeeesynd.org)

Partner Synods are groups of two or three synods from different locations in the ELCA working to form community and foster cooperation. One of the ways our synods have put this partnership to work is by exchanging bishops as an ELCA churchwide representative at our synod assemblies.

## Related organizations

### Region 1

Web site: [www.elcaregion1.org](http://www.elcaregion1.org)

Coordinator for ministry leadership:

Rev. Shelley Wickstrom

([shelley.wickstrom@elcaregion1.org](mailto:shelley.wickstrom@elcaregion1.org))

Consultation to Clergy: the Rev.

Michael Nel ([mnel@comcast.net](mailto:mnel@comcast.net))

[www.consultationtoclergy.com](http://www.consultationtoclergy.com)

ELCA Foundation/Mission Invest-

ment Fund: Margie Fiedler ([margie.fiedler@elca.org](mailto:margie.fiedler@elca.org))

## Eastern Washington-Idaho Synodical Women's Organization Board

The Eastern Washington-Idaho Synodical Women's Organization helps mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Contact: Carole Dinning, president

([cdinning@ruralnorthwest.com](mailto:cdinning@ruralnorthwest.com))

## Lutheran Men in Mission

Men in Mission builds a dynamic ministry that helps keep men of all ages actively engaged in their faith and, in turn, helps our congregations thrive.

Contact: Robert Schroeder, 509-276-

2343

## Lutheran Youth Organization

LYO empowers the youth to grow in faith, act as disciples and be servants in the world.

Contact: Kathleen Johann, LYO President ([Kathleen\\_rj@hotmail.com](mailto:Kathleen_rj@hotmail.com))

## Leading the synod in transformation

God's beloved people, As you can see we're using *The Lutheran* supplement pages a little differently this time. We've created a synod directory as a reference tool for you to use and save.

In these pages you'll see mention of the many people who serve our church, both as members of congregations and as leaders of our synod. It's as a synod that we gather as believers across the huge and beautiful territory of the Inland Northwest, as far east as Jackson and Thayne, Wyo.

The synod meets once a year in assembly to set policy. During the year these policies are carried out by an elected Synod Council led very faithfully by officers Susan Berg, vice president; Tami McHugh, treasurer; and Marilyn Rounds, secretary.

It's my privilege as bishop to join this group of officers and participate in council deliberations. Working through my office, the council directs the work of the synod staff so that all our congregations are supported and served.

How does the Synod Council lead? The most notable leadership has been in the area of mission focus. Beginning four years ago, the council determined that it wanted to do all it could to expand and grow the mission of our church in this territory. This meant addressing the assumptions about ministry (the *culture* of our church) that tend to keep us in a flat and discouraged maintenance mode instead of expanding our reach with the Good News first given to us.

To focus this work, the council set the following guiding principles: To declare Jesus Lord and Savior and to place all our trust in him in this life and the next; to approach the gift of life from the perspective of gratitude instead of entitlement; to declare we will not be afraid to fail even as we are transformed by our trust in Jesus; to look for and expect to find miracles as we press into God's future; and to welcome all people of good will who yearn for meaningful life and the adventure of faith.

In a bold gesture of leadership, this council determined that new mission opportunities might arise if we were to enter the area of senior housing and attach new mission outreach to such housing. Pressing into the greatest economic crisis our country has seen in generations, we are confident that God may use a focus on senior housing and our strategic goals to create hope for those who are discouraged and afraid.

I hope that you will review these pages carefully and, as you have opportunity, give thanks in words and prayer for the leaders of our synod. Because of their leadership we are a confident church serving Eastern Washington, Idaho and the westernmost parts of Wyoming.

With thanksgiving,  
Pr. Martin Wells, bishop



# Eastern Washington-Idaho



**The McQuaig family, members of Grace Lutheran Church, Wenatchee, left for a sabbatical in August 2008 and will return home this month. John is a certified public accountant and bank chairman. Melanie is a homemaker and community volunteer. Marit, 12, is in seventh-grade at Orchard Middle School; Gwen, 7, is in second-grade at Washington Elementary School.**



**Students celebrate Moldova's independence day.**

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successful entrepreneurs in north central Washington, as well starting and running my own businesses, I felt I could definitely help teach.

I made application to the school, provided multiple references, and did online and telephone interviews. I was chosen to teach business strategy and business plan development—right down my alley. I worked with the seniors at LCC on their capstone project, putting together a business plan. This is intended to be a plan they can execute when they return to their country of origin.

We left home in August and toured Italy and cruised on the Adriatic Sea before moving to Klaipeda.

Teaching at the college turned out to be both a great challenge and a great joy. The tasks of putting together a syllabus and preparing for classes each week took a tremendous amount of time and energy.

The students are a delight. They are eager to learn from an experienced American entrepreneur. From the questions both in and outside of class, they seem to have an insatiable

appetite for my business stories. They are anxious to learn all they can to allow them

to compete in the market economy.

The mission we were involved in at LCC is obvious and exciting. There is no question that the portion of the mission related to the “market economy” transition addresses a huge need.

However, what about the Christian worldview part? This is actually more significant in my estimation.

Eastern Europe, and Lithuania in particular, has embraced the market economy wholeheartedly. Everywhere is evidence of the market evolving. The citizens also seem to be embracing rampant consumerism and pursuit of the almighty dollar, or *lita* in their case.

Fewer than half of the students at LCC are Christians. Their pursuit of wealth needs to be tempered with the Christian worldview that the school professes and embodies.

It gives some pause to wonder why someone like me—and many other professors at LCC—would put careers on hold to volunteer. Many asked why I would leave my comfortable life in the U.S.

The answer certainly lies in pursuit of adventure but also in the

pursuit of service of a higher power and a greater good and is the result of living out our Christian faith.

Melanie spent her days home schooling our daughters—taking them to museums and markets and more. She also volunteered on campus and at our “home” congregation in Klaipeda. She also helped lead a Bible study for 20 students from LCC, which she found rewarding and exciting.

Marit maintained the family blog and enrolled in a Lithuanian language class at LCC, along with Melanie and me. Doing better than her father on the midterm exam was definitely a highlight.

Gwen studied piano with a Moldovan student, Lithuanian language with a Russian woman and played basketball (with other expat kids) with a study-abroad fellow from Louisiana ... a true multicultural experience!

The entire family has been drawn closer together by sharing new experiences and living so closely in a small apartment, with only our feet and buses for transportation.

Our sabbatical has been an enriching experience, as we have served God in a new and different way. □

*McQuaid is a member of Grace Lutheran Church, Wenatchee.*