

# 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.*

January 2017

***“Let us make music more beautifully, more eloquently, and more devotedly than ever before.”***

--Leonard Bernstein

God's Beloved People,

Blessed New Year to each of you! Whether you're reading these words while still in the run up to Christmas, or during what I hope is family time between Christmas and New Year's, or after the football feast of January 1, blessings, blessings and prayers for this new year in chronological time!

At the beginning of this new year it seems good to celebrate beauty as a source of inspiration and comfort. Two instances of beauty have graced my life in the last week and the beauty of the incarnation of God in the baby Jesus is still to come. How shall we give thanks?

Some of you know that Susan and I had the deep privilege of offering campus ministry at Pacific Lutheran University for eight years with our dear friend Daniel Erlander. A highlight of each year came as the university choirs joined forces to offer a glorious Christmas concert. Those concerts still go on and this year was our first time to return for a concert since 1994. How shall we give thanks to all of you who so generously funded the Mary Baker Russell music building, a glorious, resonant space for the music of the spheres? Thanks be to God for David Dahl, our university organist and the inspiration for the great and beautiful organ accompanying the voices! How shall we give thanks for your beautiful children and their desire to create beauty and show discipline in learning to sing? Thanks indeed to the God of the creation and the vibrations of sound that move our emotions. And thanks be to God for all of you who have invested in this university of the Church where discipleship is measured in curious and critical inquiry and faith is expressed as wonder and the harmonies of song!

The second encounter with beauty came that same night as we were invited, with other Regents and spouses, to dine with President Tom and Patty Krise. In the beautiful Gonyea House the university food service delighted our senses with smells and tastes and the vision of a heavenly banquet. May you, in this season of the senses, be charmed by the memories invested in the food you will eat and the beautiful people who will join you!

All this beauty, all this grace; all these memories and all this hope! Here, at the cusp of a new year we give thanks that we are not alone, but surrounded by a creation of beauty and the beauty of relationships grounded in love. All this is founded on the

*(continued on page 4)*



# **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS for Everyone!**

**by Pastor Helga Jansons** Director for Evangelical Mission

Every church needs to have an Annual Congregational meeting constitutionally, and it can be a little boring or perfunctory. But if you plan some new things it doesn't have to be that way.

The reports that leaders give include information which is often available in print but the stories of ministry can be told aloud, and with some forethought can be told well; engaging and meaningfully. How are lives being changed or communities been impacted through the work of your congregation? It can be a time to invite congregation members, or even others from the community to tell a brief story of what they have experienced, noticed or heard. Think of a story in case you find a chance to share it!

These stories can also be connected to your budget. Instead of a line item budget, you can offer a Narrative Budget; a usable template is on the synod website [www.ewaidsynod.org](http://www.ewaidsynod.org). However even if you don't have one, you can use the idea of having one, and that is to tell the stories associated with expenses. If you do have a Narrative Budget remember to go through it and highlight parts of it and tell the stories aloud if only briefly. It would be a shame to do all the work to have a beautiful budget but not to even skim through it with people. You know how things go, people are too busy to look at it once they get home or too exhausted after the meeting to give it another thought. Seize the moment!

Another tool to use and highlight at the meeting is the Parochial Report. Few pastors relish the idea of preparing these, especially when they are busy preparing for the Annual Congregational meeting. That is where you can help, especially if you are a Church Council member. Imagine going to see your pastor and asking her/ him whether you can help to do the report and even split up the sections that need to be done. The form is available mid-January. The benefits of having that information "at the ready" for the Annual meeting is that people do like to hear some of the information: such as the Baptized Membership of the congregation, the Average Worship Attendance, or how many people attend adult Bible Study. There are questions that could be asked of the people at the meeting with a show of hands that would help when filling it out the rest of the report about congregational vitality and leadership.

It is especially important to fill out the Parochial Reports for the next Bishop of the EWAID synod. The new Bishop will not know every congregation as our current Bishop does. Also, there are figures that the ELCA uses from these reports so that we have a clearer picture of our Synod as a whole. This information is based the last Parochial report done for each congregation. The ELCA and Synod can find the list that shows when each congregation last submitted theirs. Sometimes a pastor or leaders want to find comparison of numbers within their church or compared with other churches to see the trends or patterns. This can be easily accessed, but is not useful unless updated through the Parochial report.

Then there is another thing to take advantage of if your meeting is in January; New Year's Resolutions. Many of us make some resolutions, goals or plans in January. It is a natural new start that goes along with the promise of new life that we receive in and through Jesus Christ. Of course new life comes at any time and it is not something we can force to come our way. But through prayer I believe that Jesus directs our intentions to draw us into God's future; for us and for our congregations. What would it look like for your congregation to collectively come up with 3 New Year's Resolutions? It is about the effort not the results. We can't resolve to have 20 new members in the church. But we could resolve that every parishioner has a faith conversation with 3 people this year and, over time, invite them to church.

You can help make meetings meaningful, especially for the church you care about and God loves!



# Presiding bishop

## Hear the good news

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



*But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day*

*Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

*Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour (Matthew 24:36-44).*

Welcome to Advent.

This is the Gospel lesson for the first Sunday in Advent this year. This warning from Jesus comes after his words about the end of the world. The apocalypse is upon us, there will be tribulation and the world will see the day of God's vengeance on human sin. How perky. This doesn't quite fit with Christmas decorations, lovely carols and the relentless merriness that has been in stores, in advertisements and in the media since Labor Day.


And what about our Lord's admonition to be awake, be aware, be ever-vigilant? We won't know the hour. We might be left behind. At the very least it's exhausting to be on watch all day every day.

How is this passage from Matthew good news and how is it good news at this time of year? How does this text help us to know that we are liberated by God's grace? It sounds like law to me. It seems to be about what we need to do to be ready on that great and terrible day, so that we will be taken and not left behind. Blessed Advent? Bah humbug!

There is a secular counterpart to this apocalypse. We have long frightened children into good behavior in the weeks before Christmas by singing "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." You know the words to the song, the admonition that children remain cheerful, obedient and on the ready. The day is drawing nigh. And if that isn't enough to instill dread and the possible need for future therapy into the hearts of children, the song continues with the specter of the omniscient Claus—sleeping or waking children are never beyond his gaze.

It's interesting that pop culture can give voice to the prevailing theology of many in our congregations. We don't trust that God's promised grace is real and for us. So we come to believe and act that the word of God is not gracious, but vengeful and punishing. Through that lens there is no way we can see the gospel for the first Sunday in Advent as the announcement that we are liberated by God's grace.

But hear the good news. Jesus *was* announcing the end of the world—a world in bondage to sin and death, a world that believes in a god of "what have you done for me lately?" It's the day of God's vengeance. And this is what God's vengeance looks like—a helpless baby in a stable in Bethlehem, a helpless man on a cross outside of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:36-44 is God's word of promise, a gift to us that we might open ourselves, our eyes, our lives to the incredible, surprising, immeasurable and intimate love of God. It's right there in front of us—two men working in a field, two women grinding meal, in the ordinary, in the everyday. God doesn't want us to miss it. God wants us to watch. 

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her email address: [bishop@elca.org](mailto:bishop@elca.org). This column is based on her reflection for a new collection of Advent devotions by Eaton and leaders of the Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Episcopal Church (download at [elca.org](http://elca.org)).

This article originally appeared in the December issue of *Living Lutheran*. Reprinted with permission.

*(continued from page 1)*

great visitation by our promising God who has moved from far off in the cosmos to Kairos time in the vulnerability of the child Jesus. His is the ineffable beauty of love and desire, especially God's desire that we form a companionship in life for one another. Jesus both saves us from ourselves and knits us together again as different voices all serving the song of thanksgiving.

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope you get to experience the beauty of this season brought to a great Amen in "God With Us," Immanuel, Jesus of Nazareth, very God of very God. Fortified by such beauty and grace we enter the uncertain time of a new year with reflected beauty in our eyes, songs of joy in our ears and on our lips, and the desire that everyone know this vulnerable, hopeful God.

Blessed Christmas. Happy New Year!

Bp Martin Wells

## ***Annual Report Covers Are Now Available***

The new Annual Report Cover for 2016 has been approved.

Three formats are available – single pages, folder, cover only.

Orders for 100 copies or less can be ordered directly at 800-638-3522. Larger orders can be placed on the website. They are also available for download at [http://www.elca.org/Resources/Stewardship?\\_ga=1.259483266.96628496.1399066382](http://www.elca.org/Resources/Stewardship?_ga=1.259483266.96628496.1399066382). Printed copies should be available within two weeks.

### ***AN ADVENT INVITATION:***

*Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.....* Ro.13:11

So began the second lesson for the first Sunday of Lent. The events of these past weeks have created, yet again, another very needed "wakeup" conversation regarding a number of complex issues encompassing our nation. Specifically, the matters of intolerance and racism. May this national conversation continue in a more informed and substantive manner.

Since those involved within our communities of faith are in the midst of these discussions, why not invite them to continue this important dialogue in the context of a "safe" and structured setting?

Our Synod has as just such a resource, "Building Bridges," which provides just such a gathering. Those participating in this two-session workshop have the opportunity:

- To learn how to effectively engage with others around difficult and controversial topics and in the process, build mutual trust.

- Through exercises of self-awareness, come to a deeper understanding of personal beliefs and values and how these impact our relationships with others.

- Come to understand more accurately our nation's history of intolerance and how that continues to affect our country today.

- Examine the complex dynamics of privilege, intolerance, and racism, their causes and the many ways in which they are encountered today.

- Consider the theological implications and biblical mandates concerning these issues.

- Assess our personal journey of cultural self-awareness and ability to relate with those from other backgrounds and cultures.

- Evaluate our own institution's efforts to effectively build bridges to our communities and discern possible next steps.

For more information, contact your Synod Office and/or Pr. Alex Schmidt, [lxhappns@nwi.net](mailto:lxhappns@nwi.net) or 509.548.7012.

This 8-9 hour workshop can be in one day or divided into two separate sessions.



## Call Process Status

<b>A</b> Process beginning/congregational study	<b>I</b> Interim	<b>AP</b> Associate/Assistant Pastor
<b>B</b> Names received or on-site visits in process	<b>P</b> Pastor	<b>VP</b> Visitation Pastor
<b>C</b> Call in process/issued	<b>CP</b> Co-Pastor	<b>AIM</b> Associate in Ministry
<b>NV</b> New Vacancy	<b>LP</b> Lead Pastor	<b>L</b> Lay Position
<b>TC</b> Term call	<b>SP</b> Supply Pastor	<b>TM</b> Transition Minister (available for the open-ended call)
<b>VP</b> Visitation Pastor		

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE	
P	Boise, ID – King of Glory	B	John Hergert	I
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	NV	Betty Krafft	SP
P	Davenport, WA - Zion	NV	Stacey Friedlein	TEEM
P	Firth, ID – Bethel Lutheran	A	Paul Malek	TEEM
P	Genesee, ID – Genesee/St. John	A	Dean Stewart	P
P	Lind, WA – Good Hope Lutheran	NV	Ginny Johnson	SP
P	Mattawa, WA – Grace Lutheran	NV	Ginny Kreckling	I
P	Otis Orchards, WA – Peace Lutheran	NV	David Olson	TM
P	Pasco, WA – First Lutheran	A	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Spokane, WA – Bethlehem Lutheran	NV	Steve Wee	SP
P	Spokane, WA – Messiah Lutheran	NV		SP
P	Spokane, WA – Prince of Peace	NV	Bob Chenault	I
P	Spokane, WA – St. Mark's Lutheran	NV	Eric Dull Kate LePard	CP

### *Retirements*

Rev. Alex Schmidt, Faith – Leavenworth will retire effective January 1, 2017

Rev. Ann Frerks serving St. Paul – Quincy, WA and Holy Trinity – Ephrata, WA will retire effective January 1, 2017

## *Updating Leader and Site Profiles at Churchwide*

Starting December 15, the Mobility and Candidacy portal will be placed in read-only (no edits) mode. You will be able to view all Candidacy Applications, Decision forms, Roster Leader Profiles and Mobility Site Profile submitted by December 15.

- This date was chosen and approved in order to provide churchwide office staff the time to review and process all of the data submitted to these portal databases before December 15th. Because of the holidays and staff vacations, we felt this time was appropriate to prepare and cleanse the data to ensure our systems have integrity before they are globally updated on weekend of January 14th – 17th.
- The systems are scheduled to be live on January 17.

Here are more details:

For Mobility:

- Synods will be able to download the PDFs and work with individuals and congregations. Synods will not be able to update the Status(Active, Inactive, Archive) of an RLP or MSP after December 15th. The RLP and MSP Activity Log pages will be View Only.
- Individuals and Congregations will not have the ability to work on and submit RLPs and MSPs after December 15th, but they will be able to download a PDF of their RLP/MSP if necessary.

# Pray with us



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

for JoAnne Savage, Lord God, shepherd your child JoAnne during these horrible days of sickness. Let her mind be filled with your peace. Give skill to her doctors and nurses and all who care for her. Raise up the prayers of the church so that she may not feel alone. Let your everlasting peace descend on her so that she knows her home is in You, forever.

Amen.

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

Date : 12/01/2016 Time : 9:04:56 AM		ELCA in Region 1 Mission Support November 2016				
Accounts	MTD 2016	YTD 2016/2017	MTD 2015	YTD 2015/2016	Actual Change (from Prior Year Period)	
<b>Revenues</b>						
<b>Mission Support</b>						
01-501-00001 - Mission Support-AK	\$27,413.58	\$264,104.76	\$28,055.58	\$276,248.40	(\$12,143.64)	
01-501-00002 - Mission Support-NW	\$108,534.08	\$1,098,423.01	\$83,783.53	\$1,001,840.08	\$96,582.93	
01-501-00004 - Mission Support-EWAID	\$55,852.52	\$805,614.67	\$87,959.14	\$616,952.79	(\$11,338.12)	
01-501-00005 - Mission Support-OR	\$77,130.44	\$748,607.43	\$62,248.59	\$783,677.00	(\$35,069.57)	
01-501-00006 - Mission Support-MT	\$72,160.41	\$813,866.67	\$69,364.09	\$835,304.99	(\$21,438.32)	
01-501-90003 - Mission Support-SW	\$76,421.17	\$820,034.07	\$53,758.14	\$745,802.02	\$74,232.05	
<b>Total Mission Support</b>	<b>\$417,512.20</b>	<b>\$4,350,650.61</b>	<b>\$365,167.07</b>	<b>\$4,259,825.28</b>	<b>\$90,825.33</b>	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$417,512.20</b>	<b>\$4,350,650.61</b>	<b>\$365,167.07</b>	<b>\$4,259,825.28</b>	<b>\$90,825.33</b>	
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$417,512.20</b>	<b>\$4,350,650.61</b>	<b>\$365,167.07</b>	<b>\$4,259,825.28</b>	<b>\$90,825.33</b>	

There are still spots left in the CROSSROADS VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT AND TRANSITION SEMINAR in Seattle, Jan 24-25, 2017 and in Portland, FEB 7-8, 2017

**Crossroads**  
*Redefining Your Vocational Vision*

**REGISTRATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Confirmation sent via email)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

I am  clergy  rostered lay staff  lay staff  in-between calls  other  
(Please check all that apply)

Choose location and dates you prefer

\_\_\_ Seattle, WA - January 24-25, 2017

\_\_\_ Portland, OR - February 7-8, 2017

Please include payment with Registration

Standard Tuition \$275 \_\_\_\_\_

Early Bird Savings: **-\$25**

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail registration with payment to:  
Consultation to Clergy, 4130 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105

## SUMMER INTERNSHIP 2017

### Messiah Lutheran Church, Vancouver, WA

<http://www.messiahvancouver.org>  
<http://www.messiahnorthcounty.org>



### Description

Messiah Lutheran Church provides a ten to twelve-week immersion experience designed for current full-time college students. The experience will provide the opportunity to:

- deliberately and intentionally engage in one's own discernment process with respect to vocational call
- live into the daily life, joys, and challenges of a dynamic, active, and growing congregation
- experience various aspects of congregational ministry, including:
  - Worship
  - Education
  - Pastoral Care
  - Mission/Outreach
  - Welcome Ministry
  - Administration
  - Spirituality
  - Children's and Family Ministry
  - Youth and Young Adult Ministries
- learn and perform various leadership roles in weekend worship
- prepare and preach a sermon
- complete a summer-long project for the congregation\*
- shadow and meet with Messiah's pastors and pastoral intern in a variety of vocational settings
- consult with a spiritual director to learn to balance church life, project work, and reflection time
- meet with an internship support group for periodic check-ins, review of learnings, and receive confidential support
- receive a \$4,000 - \$4,800 summer stipend with housing provided (The intern will be responsible for his or her own transportation, and sundry food and other personal expenses other than lodging.)
- live in the Vancouver/Portland metro area with a member host family

This internship opportunity may begin as early as May 15 and must be completed by August 27, 2017. As an intern, you will be required to complete an introductory assessment survey, an exit interview, and maintain periodic correspondence with the church for a period of two years following the internship.

All application materials and reference letters must be returned by January 15, 2017. Click here to download the complete application packet: <http://bit.ly/Summer-Intern-App-Packet-2017>

The selection process will be completed by February 15, 2017.

For more information please contact: Pr. Peter Braafladt at [peterb@messiahvancouver.org](mailto:peterb@messiahvancouver.org) or 360.574.7081.

\* The intern will choose from among of 3-4 predetermined projects during the first week of internship (or earlier). He or she will be set on an early course toward fulfillment with the support of the pastors and staff at Messiah.



**Resurrection - May 2017**  
**May 19-21 or May 26-28 or May 28-30**  
**Cost is \$205 pp**  
**Registration begins January 3, 2017**

**We welcome guest artists:**



**Rachel Kurtz** is an incredible singer/songwriter with a beautiful voice and an amazing story. Rachel shares personal testimonies of tragedy and triumph with a vulnerability that captivates her audience. She has performed at the last three ELCA Youth Gatherings and has had the opportunity to travel to Africa, Germany and India with her music ministry. She has a strong desire to make a difference in the world through her music and a passion for global justice.



**Joe Davis** is a multi-media spoken word poet, teaching artist, and community organizer based in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. Engaging wildly diverse audiences— from hundreds of interfaith and intergenerational marchers at the Selma to MN 50th Anniversary March to over 35,000 youth at the Ford Field Stadium in Detroit, Michigan—Joe Davis has a gift for bringing people together around honest poems, stories, and songs. and is currently the Artist-in-Residence at Luther Seminary, pursuing a masters in Theology of the Arts.

"Like" us on Facebook (May Youth Weekends at Holden Village),  
 join our Facebook group (May Youth Weekends @Holden Village),  
 email our team at holdenmyw17@gmail.com.

*Mountain View Lutheran - Edgewood, WA currently has two positions available*

## **Part-Time Receptionist and Part-Time Discipleship Coordinator.**

<http://www.mtviewlutheran.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Part-Time-Receptionist.pdf>

<http://www.mtviewlutheran.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Part-TimeDiscipleshipCoordinator.pdf>

All applicants should also complete an employment application <http://www.mtviewlutheran.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MVLCEmploymentApplication.docx>



# ***Job Opportunity!***

## ***Coordinator of Intergenerational Ministries***

*Central Lutheran Church, a vibrant, diverse and progressive congregation located in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, has an immediate opening for a Coordinator of Intergenerational Ministries.*

*Central is excited to offer this full-time and fulfilling job opportunity. As Coordinator of Intergenerational Ministries you will divide your time between three major areas. Faith formation will include planning and administering all aspects of a progressive Christian education for youth, children and parents. As outreach coordinator, you will facilitate relationships between Central and the broader local community. Finally, as volunteer coordinator, you will inspire, develop the talents of, recruit, coordinate, and administer volunteers to match member talents and interests to congregational needs.*

*To perform all of the above, you should have a college or other post-secondary degree, some biblical or Christian academic training, a passion for working with children, youth and families, a commitment to progressive Christianity and be open and affirming to LGBTQ communities and social justice issues. You must also be a flexible self-starter who can work in a loosely structured environment, possess exceptional project management, organizational and verbal and written communication skills as well as competence with standard computer software programs. You should also be comfortable working in an urban environment, including interacting with vulnerable populations. Throw in prior experience managing youth groups or Christian education programs, academic training or coursework in youth and family ministries, and we'll be ecstatic! For more detailed job information, please go to [www.loveiscentral.org](http://www.loveiscentral.org).*

*Interested in being a critical and exciting part of Central's future? We are offering a salary of up to \$35,000 a year plus medical benefits. To apply, send your cover letter and resume detailing your prior experience and interest in our position to [cimhire@loveiscentral.org](mailto:cimhire@loveiscentral.org) by January 10, 2017. Application materials will be reviewed as they are received. Candidates should be local to the greater Puget Sound area as we are unable to offer relocation assistance. Central is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.*

### ***ABOUT CENTRAL LUTHERAN***

*Central is a ~200 member urban Seattle congregation with dozens of preschool and school-age children. We were the first open and affirming church in the Synod. Central has had a 30-year relationship with Community Lunch on Capitol Hill, a twice-weekly feeding program for low-income and homeless guests in Central's parish hall that began as a ministry of the church and is now run by a free-standing nonprofit. Central also provides space to Lutheran Peace Fellowship.*

# Advent Lutheran Church Endowment Fund



## 2016 Application

Organization/Group/Ministry \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? Y or N

What is your mission statement?

What are you requesting funds for?

If for general budget please explain your purpose.

If for something specific please describe.

How much are you requesting?

(Minimum - \$250, Maximum - \$1000)

Chaplaincy Health Care  
and  
Faith Community Nursing/  
Health Ministries Northwest

present

**Foundations  
of  
Faith Community  
Nursing:  
Whole Person  
Health Care**



January 20, 21 and March 25, 2017  
face-to-face  
1480 Fowler Street  
Richland, WA  
8 weeks of online classes  
January 23 - March 17

Faith Community Nursing/  
Health Ministries NW  
2801 N. Gantenbein Ave, Room 2027  
Portland, OR 97227

*FCN/HMN appreciates the support of Providence, Legacy, and Tuality  
Health Systems in the Portland Metropolitan Area*

**Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Course Registration Deadline: January 6, 2017**  
**Early registration appreciated!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Church Name, City and Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

I am a:  Registered Nurse (active license)  Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

**To register submit:**

- 1) Registration form
- 2) Letter of intent and/or letter of support
- 3) Payment of \$265 made out to:  
FCN/HMN

**Mail to:**

**FCN/HMN  
2801 N. Gantenbein Ave. Room 2027  
Portland OR 97227**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION,  
OBJECTIVES AND SCHEDULE**

The American Nurses Association recognizes faith community nursing as a sub-specialty in nursing. Faith community nursing holds the spiritual dimension as central to its practice. *“This Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Curriculum course is based on the curriculum developed through the International Parish Nurse Resource Center, which curriculum is owned by Church Health Center of Memphis, Inc., 1210 Peabody Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104.”*

**Objectives:**

- The participant will:
- ◆ Identify the integration of faith and health as central to the faith community nurse role
  - ◆ Demonstrate knowledge, attitude, and skills to practice as a beginning faith community nurse and/or health minister
  - ◆ Describe a Health Ministry network of continuing development and support including an inter-collegial peer system of support
  - ◆ Identify core concepts of spiritual formation; professionalism; shalom as health and wholeness; and community, incorporating culture and diversity in faith community nursing and/or health ministry

**Class Schedule:**  
 January 20, 21 and March 25, 2017  
 face-to-face  
 1480 Fowler Street  
 Richland, WA

8 weeks of online classes

**COURSE MODULES**

Unit I: Spirituality

- ◆ History and Philosophy of Faith Community Nursing
- ◆ Prayer
- ◆ Self-Care
- ◆ Healing & Wholeness
- ◆ Spiritual Care

Unit II: Professionalism

- ◆ Ethical Issues
- ◆ Documenting Practice
- ◆ Legal Aspects
- ◆ Beginning Your Ministry
- ◆ Communication & Collaboration

Unit III: Wholistic Health

- ◆ Behavioral Health
- ◆ Health Promotion
- ◆ Transforming Life Issues: Family Violence
- ◆ Transforming Life Issues: Suffering, Grief & Loss

Unit IV: Community

- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Accessing Resources
- ◆ Advocacy
- ◆ Care Coordination



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Location:**

Chaplaincy Health Care  
 1480 Fowler Street  
 Richland, WA

**Course Fees and Credit:**

The Foundations course is \$265.

**Books required: (Can be purchased in class)**

- 1) Hickman, J. (2011). *Fast facts for the faith community nurse: Implementing FCN/parish nursing in a nutshell.*
- 2) American Nurses Association (2012) *Scope and standards of practice. Faith community nursing* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Silver Springs, MD: American Nurses Association.
- 3) Morris, S. (2011) *40 days to better living optimal health.* Memphis: Church Health Center

**Letter of Support:**

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**Synod Calendar**

**December 2016**

- 19-30 Synod Office Closed
- 25 Celebration of Jesus' Birth

**January 2017**

- 1-6 Synod Office Closed
- 16 Synod Office Closed Martin Luther King Jr
- 17 Bishop Nomination Deadline
- 19 Rural Ministry Resources Meeting at Elmore Methodist Church
- 20 Presidential Inauguration
- 27-28 Synod Council - Spokane
- 29 Faith Action Network Annual Forum

**February 2017**

- 15 LCSNW and LCMEWU Benefit Play at Spokane Civic Theatre



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# THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

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## CONQUERING THE CUTBACK SYNDROME

“We simply have too many churches in this small town,” declared a respected lay leader, Tom McClain, in a long-range planning meeting. “And three are from the same denomination as our church! It makes perfect sense to merge our congregation with the West Main Street Church. And if our other two denominational churches merge, our community would then have two strong congregations. I think two healthy churches better represents our denomination than four struggling congregations.”

Although Tom’s conclusion seems logical, his approach reveals a textbook example of the cutback syndrome. Across the United States, church leaders use this common planning strategy to “fix” perceived problems and challenges. Other familiar examples in the syndrome include arguments to merge church school classes, reduce the number of worship services, or merge youth groups (typically the junior high or middle school group with the high school group). More than 1,300 congregations annually take the more extreme action of merging with another church. Finally, the ultimate cutback option involves closing the church doors permanently—a choice made by more than 3,500 churches annually.

### What Is the Cutback Syndrome?

A syndrome that affects an organization involves a characteristic combination of opinions (thoughts), emotions (feelings), or behavior (actions). In church life, the cutback syndrome reflects the human temptation to over-simplify when complex problems arise. As *feelings* of fear around these problems codify, leaders and members want to find a way to make a situation easier to understand, and the primary *thought* is to solve it with simple solutions. Generally, this prompts leaders to make arguments that place a premium on efficiency and economy. The proposed *actions* take aim at eliminating what appears to be unnecessary, redundant, or inefficient organizational features or groups in the church.

The tragic consequence of the syndrome is how it accelerates downward momentum rather than stabi-

lizing the church or reversing decline. Imagine what happens when you pull the plug on a sink full of water. As the water rushes down the drain, you can see a circular motion similar to a small tornado that gradually pulls any remaining water down with it. Some planners describe a project or effort on the brink of failure as “circling the drain.” Because cuts produce a downward force that creates even more momentum, the result is less positive impact and greater negative impact with each new cut.<sup>1</sup>

### What Creates the Cutback Syndrome?

Sources within the church and larger social trends push congregations into the syndrome. Six causes form the foundation:<sup>2</sup>

1. Members and leaders sense a gap between their perceived ideal and what appears to be a far less efficient reality in church life. The cultural ideal of “bigger is better” affects church models as well. Any congregation or group diminishing in size finds the ideal/reality discrepancy discouraging, which draws them into the syndrome. Another related dimension of the “bigger is better” ideal



PASTOR DOUG TENDED TO IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS.

is the idea of a community “monopoly” (reflected in Tom’s argument). Leaders believe reducing the number of choices strengthens the remaining options.

2. Whether it concerns ministry, programs, outreach, church growth, or problem-solving, leaders make false assumptions. They assume that the best approach will be logical, rational, functional, efficient, or economical. However, in congregations, most people think, feel, and act in terms of relationships. Personal histories—many formed over a long period—are intertwined with the histories of other members and are cemented at the place where their friendships formed: the church itself. Evaluating results by relationships leads to a different perspective and metric.

3. Many churches exhibit a strong orientation toward the past and feel the urge to recreate that past. Cutting back on redundancies and inefficiencies (particularly *new* positions in the church or *new* missions and programs) to recreate that past shows a clear misunderstanding of the true issues facing a congregation.

4. Most churches value unity and avoid conflict. Although this value is understandable, the dark side of unity is conformity. One way to simplify a complex situation is to create greater homogeneity in thought, feelings, and actions among members. Rarely do members hold this conformity belief consciously, but unconscious beliefs can go a long way in feeding the syndrome.

5. Another notion that creates the cutback syndrome is that a narrower focus means “easier to manage.” The thinking goes that if we can reduce the scope of the subject somehow, we can more easily deal with the problem.

6. When many members feel pessimistic about the church’s future, conditions are ripe for the syndrome to emerge. Pessimism spreads like a virus and infects all planning strategies.

### Is There a Cure?

First, the congregation must be willing to identify the syndrome’s presence. Once this pattern is named and acknowledged, then leaders find it easier to combat the ways it has affected planning and decision-making.

Second, the congregation must recognize the necessity of change for future viability and growth. Looking toward the future with optimism means affirming change no matter how uncomfortable it seems. Affirming change requires openness to new potential alternatives that in the past were not out in the open or were unthinkable.

Third, a congregation must stop placing a premium on economy, simplicity, functionalism, efficiency, and

conformity. Instead, pursue alternatives that maximize choices for members and the community, which affirms the values of diversity and pluralism. Develop strategies that maximize ministry to and with people, rather than preserving real estate.

Fourth, a congregation must change their approach to planning. The focus should shift to possibilities rather than problems. Leaders can evaluate decisions and policies by asking: does our current model accomplish the church’s mission? Will our actions move us forward in mission? Is our ministry here worth the changes needed? Are we willing to finish the job no matter how long it takes?

As is the case with most syndromes, the presenting traits fall along a spectrum of mild to most severe. One factor—church stability—plays a key role. Is the church stable, experiencing gradual decline, or desperate? Intervention is possible, but fast action is required if the congregation is desperate. These signs indicate how quickly leaders need to act:

- has fewer than 50 worshippers;
- 25 or fewer giving households or people;
- fewer than one lay leader for every ten worshippers;
- the average membership tenure exceeds 10 years;
- the average age of a member vs. community residents’ average age exceeds 10 years; and
- the racial/ethnic or income status of members differs significantly from people in the community.<sup>3</sup>

Rapid response is needed if the congregation exhibits four or more of these signs.

### The Silent Killer

“There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them.”<sup>4</sup>

Many diseases—hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes—disguise their warning signs. The absence of symptoms or subtle symptoms means that, as time passes, the disease progresses and becomes a “silent killer.” What are the warning signs in church life that we ignore or do not see? For many congregations, a lack of hope is the silent killer. Do you agree with this assertion?

1. Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 42.

2. Lyle Schaller, “The Cutback Syndrome,” *The Parish Paper*, Volume 8, Number 2 (1978).

3. McIntosh, 48-52.

4. Quote of Clare Booth Luce, McIntosh, 17.