

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.

July 2016

The news today, June 12, is that 49 more are killed as the result of hateful violence in Orlando. Like you I have spent too much time watching the slow unfolding of news, too much time in stunned bewilderment, too much time wondering how to frame a thought.

Here's what I think I know for sure: All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; Evil is real; Gay, lesbian, and transgendered folk are still particular targets for distorted fundamentalism of whatever sort; Guns are uniquely suited for the mayhem of quick, multiple deaths; We're going to feel lost for a while but healing is not returning to a life of denial; God weeps as Jesus's body is once again riddled with wounds; I think we're going to have to walk into this rage with repeated appeals to every new shooter, every new hater; To be this people is to be the church of Jesus Christ and there is No End to this life!

God's beloved People,

I pray that you are finding some precious re-creation time this summer, or if you're a farmer and tending crops for the rest of us, that you have a plan for re-creation after harvest!

In the meantime, and for the rest of us, the work goes on as God has given us this life and our vocations for the sake of one another and the whole creation. For you that are under-paid, or under-employed, or unemployed, we pray God will open a calling and path for you soon.

Work and hiring and employment are on my mind this month because we're initiating the process to bring on two new Net-Workers for parts of our synod.

In central Washington and in the Prairie, Panhandle, and Palouse net-work areas we're seeking candidates for these positions. A small committee of the Synod Council has reconfirmed the job description and it will be posted on the Synod website at www.ewaidynod.org.

In short, this is a ¼ time position, without benefits, and will pay between \$10,000 and \$14,000 per year. The job is building connections, a network, among the congregations and leadership of a certain territory. The Net-Worker must love an imperfect church and be ready to walk into discouragement with hope. The testimony of those who are doing, and have done, this work is that it is deeply satisfying.

Please send us the names of those persons who might thrive in this role. Please think about this call yourself and send us your letter of interest. The original network of God is the work of the Holy Spirit, giving us a lovely sense of the variety of gifts in one another, the possibility of connection across language barriers, and the impossible equation that to lose one's life is gain it. We are called to just such curious, interesting, and hopeful work!

Please pray for our process in calling two new Net-Workers into ministry.

Bishop Martin Wells



Online Giving

by Pastor Helga Jansons Director for Evangelical Mission

I like to give an offering during the worship service as an act of worship. However, there are also times when it is really convenient to be able to give online. I can do it immediately when I realize I cannot get to my church that day. When I want to give directly to the synod or the ELCA, I can. Like everyone, I have a lot of things to remember and to do. When giving online I can skip several steps that are involved in bringing in or mailing a check.

When you shop do you use cash and checks or credit card? A credit card is useful when you want to give more, and frankly, I am saving miles on my card so I can get to Australia. Others may be more generous with a credit card for reasons that are also less pure; like still waiting for their pay check to come through. What is important about online giving is the option. How many giving options does your church have?

Steve Oelschlager, Stewardship Program Coordinator, ELCA, writes: In 2014 the ELCA launched an effort to help congregations get over the hump of starting with online giving. We said we would cover the monthly fees for one year so congregations could give it a try. We had about 130 congregations take us up on the offer. 104 were already using the paper based system where a person had to fill out a form in order to give electronically. The remaining 24 congregations had no electronic capability. With the initiative, all congregations could process gifts through their website without people needing to fill out a paper form. The 24 congregations that started with no electronic giving are now averaging \$2,800/month. The average ACH gift was \$110 and the average credit card gift was \$175. About 8% of giving activity originated from smart phones or mobile devices.

Here is what we learned from phone calls afterwards:

- Need an internal champion/leader/problem solver. Likewise, internal dissent can cause problems.
- Need to advertise often and in a variety of ways including “I give electronically pew cards”
- People like the simplicity. Those who travel in winter and summer like to put their giving on autopilot.
- Many people will pay credit card transaction fees if you give them the option

Ways we publicized:

- In newsletter regularly and in bulletins with QR code so smart phones can be used
- As part of stewardship campaign, on reverse of pledge card you could sign up
- Temple talk/ testimony in worship once or twice
- Did a live demo at Council meeting using laptop and screen.
- Vanco gives sample articles which we adapted

<https://www.simplygivingbythriventcu.com> As you scroll down on the right is a link to sign up. Vanco has great customer service if anyone has questions.

“I don’t have hard numbers, but I will say that in my estimation, it only takes one person who gives a generous pledge to make up for the cost of the various automatic online giving options. Even when someone pledges to give throughout the year, often a vacation or health issues result in a skipped month of donations. With the automatic giving, there is no gap in the contributions. So one person who gave an additional \$275 (by not missing a month) would make up for the transaction fee we pay to Vanco for the entire year. I definitely think it is a worthwhile program to set up.” Loris Stupel Financial Secretary St Mark’s Lutheran church

Maybe this summer while a decrease in giving is “hot” as people go on vacation, you could more easily make the case to set up online giving so that you are ready for the Fall and for year-end gifts.



Presiding bishop

From persecution to witness

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



For many months now people have been asking for some kind of statement about the persecution of Christians around the world. It seems to be a straight-forward issue. Christians are suffering in Iraq and Syria, in Nigeria and Egypt. Palestinian Christians encounter intense pressure. Christians in some parts of India are threatened. Some would even claim that U.S. Christians are under siege. Atrocities committed against Christians by the Islamic State, Boko Haram, al-Shabab and others are regularly in the news. We hear that more Christians have been martyred in recent years than in the first three centuries of the Christian movement.

Each circumstance of violence against Christians is deeply painful. There are brothers and sisters around the world whose lives are part of the passion of Christ. People are targeted in some countries because they are Christians. But this is a complex issue. Are Christians suffering and dying as witnesses to the faith? Yes. But in many places interreligious conflict has been used as a calculated pretext for political gain. A narrative of religion vs. religion, or religion vs. society, is an effective way of generating support for one's cause. And, regrettably, suspicion and fear of the "other" leads to intolerance and discrimination.

The persecution of Christians is not new. Martyrs have existed since the beginning of the church. Stephen was martyred with the consent of Paul, who was martyred by the Roman Empire. Paul quoted the psalms, writing: "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered" (Romans 8:36).

Outrage is a natural reaction to beheadings and crucifixions. The instinct to strike back is understandable. Many Lutherans accept that in a broken world deadly force might be needed. Revenge, however, is not an option for a Christian.


I pray that none of you ever suffers violence for the faith, but every generation has faced hostility. German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering

which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ."

"Martyr" is a Greek word that means "witness," "to give testimony." A witness can also be a symbol that testifies a promised action has been accomplished. When we speak about the persecution of Christians, the real question is: "What will be our witness?"

Here is a story about how some Lutherans in Ethiopia answered that question. It happened in one of our companion synods. Some Muslims burned down a church, thinking they were attacking Roman Catholics. Instead, they burned down a Lutheran church by mistake. They were arrested and sent to jail. In that region it's the responsibility of families to take care of prisoners' hygiene and food. Instead, members of the Lutheran church asked authorities if they could dig the prisoners' latrines and feed them. That was their witness in the face of persecution.

Christians aren't the only ones being targeted and persecuted. More Muslims have reportedly been killed by the Islamic State than any other group. Our witness must be as peacemakers and as defenders of religious minorities in our country and around the world. We must be the ones who speak out when entire religions are falsely characterized by the actions of extremists. We would not accept Christianity being defined by the Ku Klux Klan or the Christian Identity movement. We should not define entire communities by the distortion of their religion.

The cross is God's visual symbol that a promised action has been accomplished. It is God's stake in the sand. It is God's witness to the truth that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-39). 

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

“Deeper Life” at Grace Lutheran Church - Wenatchee, WA

by Rev. James Aalgaard

In the summer of 2015, Grace Lutheran Church in Wenatchee WA started to think about what a catechumenate process would look like in our context. “Catechumenate” is a word we’ve inherited from our liturgical forebears. It provides the basic shape of a time of preparation for baptism, or for affirmation of baptism for those who have already received that gift. The liturgical season most often used for this time of preparation is the season of Lent. We started that summer with a guided study of Pastor Paul Hoffman’s book *Faith Forming Faith*. We created our own reflection questions based in the readings, pledged to read the book SLOWLY and had very rich conversation together (mostly based in our Evangelism Team who was looking for ways to “re-boot”).



We’ve called our version of the catechumenate Deeper Life and began the process in late January 2016. We looked for people in our congregation who might be seeking the sacrament of baptism, and were so pleased when God led us to one adult, and one family expecting their second child. Both households agreed to join us and agreed to be present at the Vigil of Easter, March 26th. We thought and prayed about who we could invite to be “faith companions”, people who are already members of Grace but would like to accompany the adults throughout this time. This was easier than we thought! We even picked up a few others who were curious about this small group experience. By the time our small group was formed (we call them “focus groups”) we had as many as 14 people joining in a conversation circle.

A very important element of Deeper Life is that this is less about “information” and more about “formation”. This means people are encouraged to come with doubts and deep questions, and with their own testimonies about how God has already been active in their lives. In fact it made us a little nervous, but we were affirmed and “stretched” when we decided that this particular “class” of Deeper Life participants in a sense created the curriculum. The sessions’ content was based on what our group seemed the most interested in.

On the night of the Vigil, it was finally time for the baptisms to happen. Family and friends were present, and they were invited to use a favorite cup, mug or other vessel to help fill the baptismal bowl. It was awesome to witness so many people cued up, ready to pour their water into the font, and in doing so, have an important part in the baptism of their loved-one.

One of the vessels was a soup bowl, hand-painted by the father of the child who was to be baptized. It was even more special to notice that the person holding the soup bowl was the grandfather of that baby boy. He mentioned that the bowl was painted by his son, some years ago, as a fundraiser for Leavenworth’s “Empty Bowls” hunger relief effort.

The leader of our focus group poured out water from a bottle she brought from her home. The water in that bottle was taken from a monastery near Ephesus. She bottled it up herself while traveling there awhile back, and thought she would save it for a special occasion.

A participant brought a commemorative plate, which is from the church of his childhood in North Dakota. He poured water from a cup, onto the plate, and into the font. This was to symbolize his appreciation for the start of his baptismal identity in Christ.

These stories materialized out of thin air, out of the moment where we anchored our life, our deeper life, in the waters of new life in Christ. If those stories would have been planned, they would have been less effective!

Grace in Wenatchee is planning to host a catechumenate training event April 28-30, 2017. Please mark it on your calendars and we will get more information out when it’s available. Pastor Paul Hoffman will be one of the facilitators and if it’s anything like our experience, it will be a rich and rewarding time. Please consider bringing a team of at least three! It will be so very helpful to have a leadership group from your congregation, all on the same page.

In a world where we often seek quick, technical patches to problems in congregational life, we are called to think deeply about how to adapt, use our strengths in creative new ways, and in so doing, relearn how to articulate the Good News and claim that we really are evangelical.

Small Group Takes Small Steps to Save Energy

By Mary Stamp

A small group at Faith Lutheran Church in Leavenworth read a book in 2013 that inspired them to embark on a community solar project. When they read Frances Moore Lappé's book, *EcoMind: Changing the Way We Think to Create the World We Want*, the group was struck by her assertion that climate change can still be stabilized if millions of people take small, deliberate actions.



Solar panels on the middle school produce enough electricity for three homes

Essentially, the six decided to work towards creating the world they want. “We didn’t want to be immobilized by the sense of hopelessness that so many people feel about climate change,” said Lisa Therrell, chairperson for the church’s Earth Stewardship Group “We wanted to do something to make a difference with climate change by reducing carbon emissions,” said MaryCarol Nelson, a member of the group and one of the project organizers of the Icicle River Middle School community solar project.

Another group member, Barbara Rossing, a professor at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, suggested doing a solar project in the community.

She said solar panels would be “a visible sign of the church’s commitment to a vision of hope for the future of the world.” Barbara learned about Washington’s Renewable Energy Cost Recovery Incentive Payment Program. Their project would be “a small, but important, step to help our economy transition away from fossil fuel-dependence, a vital energy shift, reflecting our love for God’s people and all creation,” said Barbara, who had already installed 39 panels at her home. The group worked for a year with

consultant Ellen Lamiman of Energy Solutions in Winthrop, the Chelan Public Utility District (PUD) and Cascade School District. Ellen handled the technical aspects of designing the system and navigating the program requirements.

Four Faith Lutheran members recruited investors and donors to support the first community solar project in Chelan County. In June 2014, 96 photovoltaic solar panels were installed on the Icicle River Middle School roof. The panels produce 19,680 watts, enough to power three homes. “Under Washington’s Renewable Energy Cost Recovery Program, a solar project can be designed to allow a community jointly to donate to and invest in a solar installation on a public property. A nonprofit, in this case Faith Lutheran, can be the project administrator,” said Lisa. Investors receive an annual payment based on energy produced through June 2020, which allows them to recover their investment, she said. “We thought the school would use the power generated, but it was easier to put the energy back into the power grid,” Lisa said. “The school receives Sustainable Natural Alternative Power (SNAP) payments from the Chelan County PUD for electricity generated.” Through SNAP, the PUD makes small-scale solar and wind power more cost-effective for customers who donate a little extra on their utility bills. Individuals, schools and nonprofits are generating solar and wind power, building a base for renewable energy in the county. There were 15 more individuals and businesses installing solar panels in 2015, according to the Chelan County PUD.

When some questioned why installing solar panels would be part of a church’s ministry, Lisa said that creation care is integral in the church’s mission statement: “To incarnate the gracious, healing and reconciling presence of God through sacramental worship, congregational nurture, and ministries of peace, mercy and justice for all Cre-

(continued on page 9)

Call Process Status

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

POS	LOCATION/CONGREGATION	STATUS	PASTORAL CARE	
P	Boise, ID – King of Glory	B	Kristi Bummer	I
P	Boise, ID – Shepherd of the Valley	B	Joel Westby	I
P	Chelan, WA – Holden Village, Fullness of God	B		
P	Cheney, WA – Emmanuel Lutheran	A	Shelley Wee	I
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	NV	Betty Krafft	SP
P	Connell, WA – Gideon	NV		
P	Firth, ID – Bethel Lutheran	A	Paul Malek	TEEM
P	Kennewick, WA – Lord of Life	C	Ron Shipman	I
P	Lind, WA – Good Hope Lutheran	NV		
P	Mattawa, WA – Grace Lutheran	NV	Ginny Kreckling	I
P	Otis Orchards, WA – Peace Lutheran	NV		
P	Pasco, WA – First Lutheran	A	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Spokane, WA – Bethlehem Lutheran	NV	Steve Wee	SP
P	Spokane, WA – Messiah Lutheran	NV	Cathy Harrison	SP
AP	Spokane, WA – St. Luke Lutheran	NV	Jim Johnson	LP
P	Wilbur, WA – Wilbur Lutheran	B		
P	Yakima, WA – Central Lutheran	B	Phil Nesvig	I

Roster Changes

Rev. Dennis Andersen has resigned his call at Peace Lutheran Church in Otis Orchards. His last Sunday will be June 26. Pastor Andersen will now serve full-time as Chaplain at Hospice of Spokane.

Rev. Justin Johnson had accepted a call in Ontario Oregon.

Rev. Laura Olsen has resigned her call to Messiah Lutheran, Spokane, WA effective May 15, 2016

Lutheran Church of the Master – Pasco celebrated their final worship April 10th.

About Bishop's Convocation

Bishop's Convocation, October 24-27, 2016, Walla Walla, WA.

More complete information will be mailed on August 1, but Convocation this year will be a three-night event instead of the usual two-night plan. That means the cost will run about \$175.00 more than usual. We have done this extended event every three or four years when we had a larger program and purpose that needed attention. This year the program will serve the synod's process of electing a bishop in May, 2017, by offering program from three solid speakers on "Bishop According to the Constitution," "Bishop in the Lutheran Confessions," and "The office of bishop in American Lutheran history." Videos of these presentations will be available to all EWAID congregations beginning in January of 2017.

Thanks, as always, for making sure your rostered leaders can attend this mandated event. Registration will open in August when you receive your brochure.

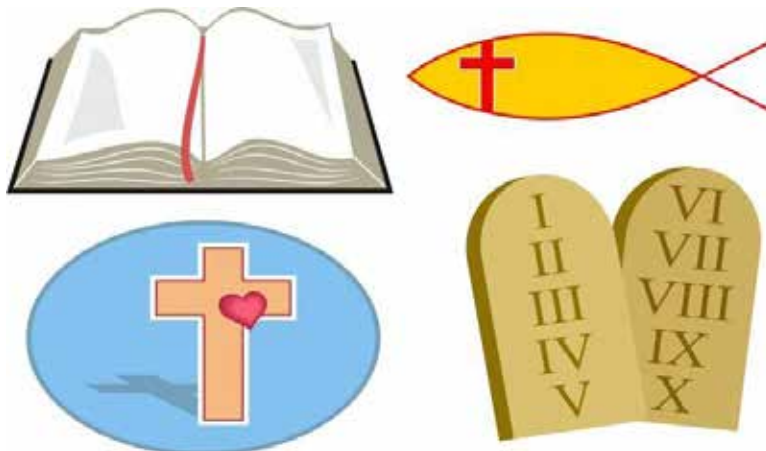
**ST PAUL LUTHERAN 1916 - 2016
100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

SUNDAY SERVICE JUNE 26, 2016 10:00 AM
Bishop Martin Wells Presiding
Potluck following the service

OPEN HOUSE - JUNE 26, 2016 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
The community of Chewelah is invited.

Historical pictures will be available for viewing during the open house (some from a group trip to Israel).

Please come and join us in our celebration of 100 years of spreading the good word through the Grace of God.



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 the friends and family of Al Krafft, father of Rev. Betty Krafft, at the time of his death

for our rostered leaders, may their words and their ways inspire us.

for our children, may they teach us to be children at heart.

for those in the caring professions, may their work be effective and life changing.

for those that walk an uncertain path, may their hearts lead them in the right direction.

for the people of the world, may there always be more good than evil.

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



8 Lakes Leg Aches Bike Ride ~ Saturday, August 6, 2016

A benefit bike ride for the SAFeT Response Center of Lutheran Community Services. Join over 700 riders for one of the best organized bike rides in Eastern Washington where riders enjoy the beautiful scenery of West Spokane, Cheney and Medical Lake. There's a perfect ride for everyone. Choose from 15, 30, 45 or 75 mile routes – the 75 mile route passes Willow, Granite, Silver, Medical, Clear, Chapman, Kepple and Fish Lakes, for the full 8 Lakes ride experience. The 15-mile route is perfect for families and folks dusting their bikes for the first time this year. Each route includes snack stops and SAG support along the course.

Ride only: \$50.00 With T-shirt: \$60.00. There are great prizes for those individuals raising pledges. Every rider who raises \$225 or more in pledges receives a limited edition 8-Lakes Leg Aches Jersey! In addition, we offer great prizes! **The more you raise, the better the prize!**

For more information go to www.lcsnw.org/8lakesride or contact Christie McKee at 509-343-5020 or email at cmckee@lcsnw.org.

Sponsored by The Northern Rockies Institute of Theology/Montana Synod

Our first digital offerings are now available on our website. When you purchase the classes, you will have access to them throughout 2016 so can offer the class as a multi-session adult study or watch on your personal computer at your convenience.

DIGITAL EDUCATION

Learning Our Place: Wilderness and Wonder from a Biblical Perspective

With Dr. Kathryn Schifferdecker, professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary

This course will explore the book of Job and several other biblical texts (Genesis, Leviticus, Psalms, and Romans, among others) for insights about God, creation and humanity. What kind of world is this? What is our place in this world? How does the Bible speak of wilderness and wild creatures? **What about “acts of God?”** These and other questions will be addressed as we seek to come to a biblical understanding of our place in **God’s wild, risky and beautiful creation.**

Cost of 12 months of access to the class is \$40

Syria in the Bible and in the Early Church: A Heritage at Risk

Taught by Dr. Thomas Lee who served for many years as Lutheran campus pastor at the University of Montana, Missoula, where he also—as a faculty affiliate—taught biblical Hebrew and Aramaic in UM’s Religious Studies Department. During the 1980s and into the 1990s he served on the staff of two archaeological projects in the Kingdom of Jordan and one in the Republic of Syria.

In recent months **we’ve become aware as well of the tragic loss of Syria’s rich cultural heritage at the hands of ISIS** and by those who profit from the looting and sale of antiquities. This loss of antiquities and the humanitarian tragedy are not unrelated. As Dr. Amr al-Azm, a former official in the Syrian Ministry of Antiquities who now teaches Middle Eastern History and Archaeology at Shawnee State University in Ohio, **reminds us: “A people without a history is a lost people . . . and history without people is meaningless.” Not only the Syrians, but we too are deeply invested in Syria’s history as evidenced by the bible and in the history of the early church. The loss of Syria’s cultural heritage, then, is not only a tragedy for the Syrian people, but a tragedy for us as well.**

In this NRIT presentation by Tom Lee, we will explore the importance of ancient Syria for the bible and the church and will attempt to convey some sense of the threat posed by the Syrian civil war to our common cultural heritage.

The Cost of the class is \$25. *After the percentage taken out by the online registration company, the remaining amount of each registration fee will be sent to the American Schools of Oriental Research for their “Syrian Heritage Initiative.” ASOR’s “Syrian Heritage Initiative” is committed to assist in whatever ways possible the preservation of antiquities under threat by the Syrian civil war.*

To purchase these classes, go to www.nrit.org. Click on the NRIT logo on the upper left side of the page. This will bring you to the NRIT home page. Under the logo, to the right side, click on NRIT Digital Education Store. Then click on the class you would like to access.

You will need to pay online with a credit or debit card.

After you have placed your order, you will be sent an email with all of the access information.

Questions? Contact Dir. Jenny Kunka at j.kunka@nrit.org

Look for more offerings to come!

(continued from page 5)

ation.” “Contributing clean renewable energy into the regional grid helps reduce dependence on carbon-emitting fuels,” said Lisa. “Faith Lutheran, a congregation of 100, has a reputation for instigating good things,” she said. “The community has trust in the goodwill of the church to come through with a project.” Other past projects of Faith’s Earth Stewardship Group have included having a potter make 100 ceramic mugs and soup bowls to save on paper waste, installing a bike rack at the church, and offering seminars on gardening.

Care of creation comes naturally to Lisa, who has lived in Leavenworth for 24 years. She retired there after 34 years of working with the U. S. Forest Service in Washington and Idaho as a wilderness manager and planner, managing the interface between people’s desire for recreation and leaving wilderness natural and undisturbed. “I assessed how to do the least damage,” said Lisa, who graduated in 1981 in biology and environmental studies from Seattle Pacific University. “I was always nature oriented and started learning about plants and birds from my mother. I liked being in the woods,” she said of living near Issaquah, where she grew up.

She attended a church, but left it, frustrated by consumptive attitudes parishioners held towards creation. As she moved with her work with the Forest Service, she tried different churches, a Presbyterian church in Roslyn, Wash., and a Methodist church in Grangeville, Idaho.

Visiting Holden Village in 1985 introduced her to the Lutheran church and its belief that creation care is important. She moved to Leavenworth in 1992 and started attending Faith Lutheran. Lisa said that Faith’s Earth Stewardship Group also worked with the City of Leavenworth and Project Bayern to install recycling bins where tourists can leave cans and bottles. “With the Clean Water Act, the nation’s tap water is good,” she said. “There are parts of the world where I would not drink the water,” said Lisa, “but most bottled water is from a tap. The water in Leavenworth is from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. It’s clean, fresh, treated, filtered and tested for 72 contaminants. “We would like to promote Leavenworth as a sustainable tourist destination. We want to work with motels to be less resource consumptive,” she said.

Lisa and Barbara also participate in Climate Conversations North Central Washington, an ad hoc group that advocates for response to climate change. They also link with groups like Leavenworth Sustainability Alliance to encourage businesses to develop new ways they can be sustainable, and work with Earth Ministry in Seattle on education programs. Recently the Methodist pastor, and members of Faith Lutheran and Our Lady of the Snow Catholic Church read and studied the Pope’s encyclical *Laudato Si*, “Care of Our Common Home.” About 20 people met six times over the winter, and have now become an ecumenical group.

Environment is just one of Faith Lutheran’s outreach efforts, Lisa added. People from the church helped start the Community Cupboard Food Bank, which provides relief services, and an Empty Bowls event to raise money for the food bank. Then came cooperative housing and a free clinic, managed by Upper Valley MEND (Meeting Each Need with Dignity), which Faith Lutheran helped form in the 1980s. MEND also has an adult family home for the developmentally disabled. Meanwhile, Faith Lutheran has engaged with the local immigrant population and is offering English as a second language and citizenship classes. “We are a small church, but act on our faith by extending God’s love and providing service to our community,” Lisa said.

For information, call 509-548-4387 or email merrymulesears@msn.com.



Lisa Therrell told what a small group accomplished in Leavenworth

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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July 2016
Newsletter

Let Down the Nets
Lifting Our Vision
Jesus First, Last, Always
God's Grace, Our Gratitude
The Spirit Powers Us
No Fear! Transformation
Connections Multiply Miracles
Go, Tell & Serve



Please reproduce any and all articles for publication in congregational newsletters or bulletins.
The **Cross Connection** is also available on the synod website at
<http://www.ewaidssynod.org/synodpublications.html>.
Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.

Synod Calendar

June 2016

25 Sierra Westerman Ordination - Grace, Wenatchee

July 2016

16 Lodge Dedication at Luther Heights

31 Ice Cream Social at Messiah Lutheran - Spokane, WA

August 2016

2 Latino Table Meeting

8-13 Churchwide Assembly - New Orleans, LA

September 2016

16-17 Synod Council Meeting - Spokane, WA

October 2016

10-11 Rural Ministry Retreat - Immaculate Heart Retreat Center - Spokane, WA

27-27 Bishop's Convocation - Walla Walla, WA



Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our Hands

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THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

EDITOR: CYNTHIA WOOLEVER—WWW.THEPARISHPAPER.COM

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WHEN CHARITY BRINGS ANYTHING BUT RELIEF

Is it possible that our best intentions can do more harm than good? Sadly, relief organizations tell us that well-meaning people don't think before they give. Some involved in humanitarian work after a natural disaster call the deluge of unwanted donations "the second disaster."

Juanita Rillig, director of the Center for International Disaster Information, described what happened after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004: So many donated clothes were piled on an Indonesia beach that workers had no time to sort and distribute them. The clothing pile became toxic and local officials had to destroy it all. They poured gasoline on it and sent it out to sea.¹ She related another example of unfortunate waste when contributors sent 100,000 liters of water to West Africa at a cost of \$300,000. Relief organizations with portable water purification units could have provided that same amount of water for \$300.

Following the December 2012 shooting tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, more than 60,000 teddy bears arrived from around the country, along with toys, bicycles, and clothes. Already overwhelmed, residents had to get a warehouse to hold it all.

Crisis Relief or Chronic Needs?

Because Americans are compassionate, they tend to respond initially with their hearts rather than their minds. Even Warren Buffett admitted that it is much easier to make money than it is to give it away wisely. The first step is assessing whether an event is a crisis or a reflection of ongoing chronic needs.

Crisis relief. Churches and people of faith offer the best immediate crisis relief when they make smart cash donations to trusted organizations. In most cases, sending supplies is simply not practical. Responding to a crisis with immediate relief is likely a month-long effort.

Chronic needs call for complex solutions, hard work, and long-term commitments. The commitment required when tackling these situations is likely an effort of years or decades.

When well-meaning people behave as if they are addressing a crisis rather than a chronic need, the long-term results are dependency, deception, and disempowerment.² Churches need to engage strategically in both types of charity efforts.

Making Meaningful Change through Mercy and Justice

Many congregations involve members in mission trips and volunteer opportunities in local service projects. Unfortunately, too many mission trips or local service projects are not a wise investment, do not significantly improve quality of life, and do not relieve poverty for the intended community. For example, the funds spent for one Central American ministry mission trip to repaint an orphanage would be enough money to hire two local painters, pay the salaries of two full-time teachers, and purchase new uniforms for every school student.³

The Bible contains the basic template for guiding us to holistic charity because it places equal emphasis on



THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN AMAZING!
WE'VE ALREADY EXCEEDED LAST YEAR'S
"AIR CONDITIONERS FOR THE ARCTIC" MISSIONS PROJECT.

mercy and justice. Micah 6:8 instructs us: “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” To act justly means that we treat others fairly, with reason, and *involve them in all decision making*. These acts engage our minds. On the other hand, merciful acts reflect heartfelt responses. To act with mercy in our work with others means that we show compassion, kindness, and forgiveness. Combining mercy and justice suggests that immediate relief comes with a future plan in mind and avoids long-term dependency.⁴ Showcasing these principles, one church closed their successful used clothes closet run by volunteers and reopened it as a clothes store (with modest prices) that employed people in the neighborhood, thus reducing dependency and providing agency to community members.

An Oath for Wise Compassion

Too often our intent contrasts sharply with the actual impact. Because every change has consequences, we must carefully examine outcomes. Robert Lupton draws on his forty years of urban ministry experience to suggest an oath for compassionate *and* wise partnerships similar to the medical profession’s Hippocratic Oath.⁵ Here are key guidelines for empowering those we assist.

- Never do for the poor what they have (or could have) the capacity to do for themselves.
- Be an encourager or partner rather than a caretaker.
- Use one-way giving in crises. Try partnership approaches when addressing chronic needs.
- Establish empowering partnerships through employment, lending, and investing. The micro-loans of Opportunity International (www.opportunity.org) and the community development approach of World Vision (www.worldvision.org) are two excellent examples.
- Always put the needs of those being served first, even if it makes your efforts less efficient and more frustrating.
- Listen closely to what is said and unsaid by those you are serving. The unequal power dynamic of the interaction can lead to harmful assumptions.
- Above all, do no harm.

Diversified or Focused Investment?

Attention to outcomes leads to a strategy shift. The size of the budget or the number of volunteer hours is irrele-

vant to making a difference. To effect significant change requires centered concentration on specific places and issues. When we define our service mission too broadly, we scatter our church’s energy and resources. Lupton recommends that congregations ditch the diversified, “balanced portfolio” and commit to measurable and lasting change by focusing investment in one person, one family, and one neighborhood at a time.⁶

Consistent with an asset-based community development model (<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>), focused investors search for local residents’ skills and existing resources. When church partners flip their binocular lens to see community positives, like seeing the glass half-full, they catch sight of basic strengths that become building blocks for healthier communities. There is a universal desire to live in a healthy community. And the criteria for a healthy community is also universal: safety for everyone, good schools, economic viability, opportunities for employment, residential stability, community connections, and spiritual vitality.⁷

Located in a low-income community, the Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, exemplifies this type of a long-term, focused investment strategy. As a church, they strive to lift up the “diverse gifts of our neighbors and members, not their deficiencies.” They say, “We see abundance.”⁸ By having conversations and listening for opportunities, they find ways to connect and invest in their neighbors.

Final Questions

A community ministry worth doing is a ministry worth examining. Here are the key questions: Is your church engaged in community development ministry? If so, can you name your target neighborhood and the church’s transformation goals? Are your church’s efforts focused on efficiency or effectiveness? Are you focused on the rewards you receive from service or the measurable benefits received by your community partners?

1. Scott Simon (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/when-disaster-relief-brings-anything-but-relief/>). See donation guidelines (<http://www.cidid.org/wp-content/uploads/CIDI-Donation-Guidelines.pdf>).

2. Material drawn from Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2011), 56.

3. *Ibid.*, 5.

4. *Ibid.*, 41–42.

5. *Ibid.*, 8–9.

6. *Ibid.*, 76.

7. *Ibid.*, 135.

8. <http://www.broadwayumc.org/pages/who.html>.