

# CROSS

# Connection



*The Cross Connection is a monthly publication of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod published for its clergy, members, deacons, lay leadership and ecumenical partners.*

March 2017

God's beloved people,

I've just celebrated 68 years of life and a gift-photo is posted on Facebook of me holding Abigail Claire, our new granddaughter, daughter of Mary Emily and Jason Duba, our beloved son-in-law. In the picture Abigail is wide-eyed, intense, and curious, her mouth shaped to speak life. It is a penetrating picture that requires attention. The picture was taken by Abigail's smitten Aunt Magdalena over the Christmas holiday, while we loved one another in a home imbued with the grace of Grandmother Susan.

Perhaps like many of you privileged to be grandparents I'm experiencing my own projections from that picture and wondering about that vulnerable, imprintable child. In particular, I know I am shaping a future for Abigail, one that will be handed on to this vulnerable one. By my projections, and those of her parents and the world around her, she will become us, however we shape her.

Here is the best of us: We hand on promise, much like our generous God did with Abraham and Sarah and the lineage of Israel. This promise has been denied, defied, and all but destroyed over the course of human life. The scenes in the Garden of Eden are just a premier of all the ways humans will arrogate to themselves the gifts and power of God. Without an anchoring promise we drift, afraid, alone, and anxious, wondering whether anything makes sense. And here we are today.

This existential anxiety can be manipulated a number of ways, but is most likely to be pressed by those who stand to gain from our fears. If we can be kept in a constant state of fear we are manipulable, that is, controllable by those who do not live from anything but hopelessness, survivor-cunning, and personal gain.

That is, unless we remember that we have been counseled by more than 100 texts from scripture to "be not afraid." I remember Abigail's eyes again, taking in life. Will she absorb fear from me, or promise? And what of those who DO promote fear? Shall I fire back in a downward death-spiral for dominance or might I press in the same compassion and promise that inspires my life?

Our own hearts, rightly defined, offer a different anchor for those in fear. Fear scurries away when confronted by confidence and confidence arises from Promise. Our God promises life to all those who seek it, first to the children of Abraham and then to those of us who see in Jesus of Nazareth God's promise fulfilled. From Jesus this promise expands to the whole world through us. Or it doesn't. Abigail waits. All the children wait, blank slates. Others wait, even our enemies, waiting for a better way than fear. Today I beg you: Don't be afraid. Instead, bear promise into life!

Bp Martin Wells



# Presiding bishop

## “It’s not what we do”

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



At the end of the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to John, many disciples who had been following Jesus left him. Looking at the 12, Jesus asked, “Will you also go away?” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal

life” (John 6:66-68). It was a kind of crisis at the beginning of the Jesus movement.

Jesus had been teaching about the gracious gift of life that comes from the Father through Christ. People were amazed by the multiplication of the loaves and fish and all of the talk about the bread of life. They wanted to know what they had to do to be doing the works of God. Jesus’ answer, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent (John 6:29),” didn’t sit well the crowd. I suspect that the most fervent among them wanted marching orders and the more careful wanted a checklist to make sure they were on track.

Questions in Scripture are fascinating; they are often more revealing than the answers. “What do *we* do?” “Teacher, what good deed must *I* do to have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). The people in John and the young man in Matthew wanted to know not only what they could do to save themselves, but to be assured that it was indeed in their power to save themselves.

We don’t ask different questions today. When it comes to the great metaphysical questions we ask, “How do *I* know? How am *I* sure?” It’s a hard thing to believe that it’s God’s good and gracious will that all be saved from death, and since we can’t save ourselves, God has done it through Jesus’ death and resurrection. It’s not what we do or even about that which we are certain, but what God has done, and God’s faithful and sure promise. In a recent survey of ELCA Lutherans, Kenneth Inskip, director for research and evaluation, asked the question: “What must you do to be saved?” Fifty percent answered: “Do good works.” Fifty percent of Lutherans.

At least half of us admit that, deep down, we believe it’s still up to us. Let’s not beat ourselves up—this isn’t a Lutheran phenomenon, this is not


an American phenomenon, this is not a 21st-century phenomenon—it’s a human phenomenon. We either disbelieve for joy or don’t want to give up control.

This is precisely why we need well-trained confessional, scriptural, theological, liturgical, compassionate pastors and deacons: to keep us pointed to Jesus, to the law, to the cross, to the resurrection and away from the world’s siren song of self-help, self-determination and self-righteousness.

And this is precisely why we need confessional, scriptural, theological, liturgical, compassionate laypeople: so we “... fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching or God’s word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it” (Martin Luther’s Small Catechism).

Two major initiatives requested by the ELCA Church Council and informed by your input have come to the same conclusion. The Theological Education Advisory Council and the Called Forward Together in Christ process both lifted up the importance of well-formed lay, consecrated and ordained leadership. We must keep the saving gospel of judgment and promise as our foundation and future.

This is the work of the entire church. It’s not up to the seminaries to identify and recruit pastors and deacons, nor is it the exclusive province of the ordained and consecrated to be grounded in the word. Start looking at fourth- and fifth-graders in your congregation. Support church camps, Lutheran campus ministries, and Lutheran colleges, universities and seminaries. Encourage Young Adults in Global Mission.

We’ve received a \$3 million gift to the ELCA Fund for Leaders, which will provide full tuition scholarships for up to 60 additional students over the next three years. This is just one part of a multifaceted leadership initiative that we are launching now. When people ask how the ELCA can be relevant, I answer: only if we are sure that our hope is in the living Christ and only if we share that with the joy of the gospel. 

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

## *Talking to Kids about Stewardship*

*Terri Lindemann, Stewardship Committee*

I may be the worst person to write about talking to kids about stewardship. My kids argue about everything: whose feet were on the chair first, who let the cat out, who left the mess on the couch. They even argue about who gets to put the check into the offering plate on Sunday mornings. (We've implemented a fool-proof plan for this: we write whoever's turn it is in the check register. Nobody's got time to remember this small of a detail from one week to the next!)

But in the small moments, between arguments, one great hope that I have for my children is for them to know that they are blessed to be a child of God and therefore, can be a blessing to others. Sharing a smile, singing or dancing along to the music at worship and inviting new friends to play are natural ways that kids are part of our congregation, our families and our world.

I encourage you to talk to the kids in your life, be they neighbors, grandkids, nieces or nephews or ones that come to church about the things that excite them. Last month was "Idaho Gives Day", a state-wide effort to encourage giving to non-profits. At our house, we talked about it the week leading up to the day and discussed some of the non-profits taking part. We gave each of our kids \$10 to donate to the non-profit of their choice. My 9 year-old chose the Idaho Humane Society because of his love of animals. My 4 year-old chose Boise Bicycle Project because of her love of biking. Next year, their donations will come out of their own money. 😊

I'm thankful for something like "Idaho Gives Day" to bring up the topic of giving and stewardship in my family. However, I am working towards reminding myself and my kids that stewardship isn't just something that comes around once a year on a special day or even each Sunday when the offering plate is passed. Rather, it is all of our collective everyday tasks. Each decision we make about how we use our time and our money reflect who we are as children of God.

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## *Food Truck Ministry*

*Pastor Bob Kenyon, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Ritzville WA*

I hear more and more people say: "There are so many people who are in need: hunger in this land of abundance; people suffering terrible experiences and feeling like they are all alone. We'd love to help...but how?"

Rick Rouse, in his new book: Beyond church walls make this observation. "A missional perspective of pastoral care embraces the notion that all of God's people—not just trained professionals—are called to partner in the healing and redemption of the world."

What people need to learn to care outside the walls of their church is not a motivation but a method....a way... empowerment through training....feeling commissioned by God in Christ.

One of the ways many congregations have showed their love for their community by working with Second Harvest and Thrivent to provide the second harvest food truck with about 8,000 lbs of food to come to their community, use the church parking lot, and give away the food on that truck in about 2 hours.

The first time I visited the food bank, I handed out fliers telling about the day and time and inviting anyone and everyone to come and get food. They came at first with flimsy bags, and were grateful to see boxes we had for them. About 20 members came to help bag, as well as give away food, carry it to their cars, and a lot more.

Many of the participants began to ask "why is your church doing this?". Some of our members didn't know what to say. The second year, we instructed them to say: "We're grateful for all God in Christ has done for us, and so we want to help you because you are loved by God too." That took the exercise to a wholly deeper level. People didn't just say, thank you, but also something like "God bless you for loving us".

It costs \$750 for the food truck. But, we raised that money through using the Thrivent gift card to buy soup, bread and dessert for Lenten soup suppers. Volunteers prepared it, served it and we had devotions right at the tables. We raised more than we needed to raise. Soup with a greater purpose in mind.

Also, we began to take a little time before the event to ask: "Why is there this kind of poverty in our little town? What could or should our country do to help us combat poverty in our community? How could resources be shared more equitably?" That took our food give-away to a whole different level. We studied John 6 and shared communion before we served. It then became obvious to us that while we hosted the truck, Christ was both host and guest at this event.

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## ***BEING the Body of Christ***

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

We are connected. We belong to the body of Christ. Who we are, matters to others that are part of the Church. Likewise, we care about the wellbeing of other people of faith, especially those with whom we are closely linked.

Within a congregation people share a life of faith together: worship, bible studies, activities, fellowship, decision-making, leadership development, financial support, prayer, caring for others, reaching out to the community collectively and supporting other ministries.

Even though we do not see other congregations weekly, we are also connected to each other as the EWAIID synod. Every week 92 worshipping communities from Bonners Ferry, ID to Jackson WY, 3 campus ministries, 4 outdoor ministries and 17 chaplains/specialized ministers are doing ministry. We belong to all of what is happening as the body of Christ. When an ELCA chaplain rostered in our synod visits someone in a Boise hospital, that is what we are doing together as the synod.

There are other local denominations with which we feel more loosely related to, but in God's eyes the connection may not be so loose. And then there is the churchwide ELCA that we are all functionally part of depending on how much we care to know or look to other ministries as resources. They are just a phone call or a click of a website link away. [www.elca.org/resources](http://www.elca.org/resources)

How can we be the body of Christ in ways that make a difference? It is not just our status or condition that we are the Church. If we the church together, this partnership must mean something to us. We are better together only if we act like we are.

Those who are in leadership roles within a congregation or the synod have a better sense of our link to each other. They hear how we support each other and where the Mission Support dollars go. Synod Council members are part of the decisions just like a Church Council. Those who attend Synod Assembly, the annual meeting of the synod, get to meet people from other congregations, worship together, hear what is going on across the synod territory and ELCA churchwide, and where the money goes.

Mission Interpreters in every congregation, or people who naturally tell others what is going on beyond their own congregation, have access to information and stories of what God is doing in our synod and ELCA to make a difference in the world. (Let me know if you need a Mission Interpreter in your church).

I have heard Pastors, Church Council Presidents and Treasurers make a case for giving Mission Support to the Synod. If the explanation is limited to the congregation's experience of the Bishop, or needing to support the particular ministries that are in greater need – campus ministry, new ministry starts, Latino ministries, rural ministries and small struggling congregations – something still needs to be said about the ongoing healthy partnership that exists. Communication and support keeps us all together, and there is work being done that is beyond our own immediate experience or knowledge.

We don't know all that is going on in our own church. The larger and more vital a congregation is, the less everyone knows everything, since there is so much going on. We don't give our offering because we like the pastor and we were visited when we were unwell. We support all that goes on in the life of the church whatever that may be. What a blessing and relief that we are part of something greater than ourselves. We trust that God is at work in ways beyond our knowing or understanding. We give to God's ministry because we need to give, and we are part of the body of Christ.





## Introducing Casey Cross

*the Eastern Washington – Idaho  
Gathering Synod Coordinator*

I am thrilled to serve as your Gathering Synod Coordinator for our upcoming youth gathering in Houston: This Changes Everything. This truly is a life-changing event for our youth and adult leaders. I know because I have attended five ELCA youth gatherings, have been the primary leader for three of those gatherings, and I served the Sierra Pacific Synod as their Synod Day Director in the summer of 2015. The look of gratitude and inspiration on the faces of those who have gone to gatherings is unmistakable. I look forward to being someone who will encourage participation, communicate important notes about the gathering with you, and answer any questions you may have about this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

When I'm not providing gathering information and trainings for our synod, I serve as the Young Disciples Director at Hope Lutheran Church in Eagle, ID. My husband, dog, and I are new to Idaho, living here for about a year and a half. We are very happy here. I am so glad to be part of this synod!

If you have a small youth group, or are unsure about participating in the upcoming youth gathering, I hope you will contact me at the information listed below so that you can be included in our Gathering Synod E-mail list. The emails I will send out will be a good way to learn best practices for preparing for and participating in the Gathering. It will also be an easy way to determine whether the Gathering will be something you and your congregation will want to be involved in.

I am pleased to announce that our synod has agreed to support the involvement of our synod youth in two pre-gathering events with a scholarship fund for those in financial need. The pre-gathering events are called MYLE (Multicultural Youth Leadership Event) specifically for youth of color and those whose primary language is not English, and the tAble, (previously known as DAYLE, Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event) for young people who live with a wide range of physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Both of these events serve to encourage, support, and empower the participants as critical members of our church body and witnesses of the Good News of Christ. In order to disperse our scholarship funds, we will have a special application process. More information about the scholarship fund and application process will be shared in our upcoming Gathering Synod Emails.

Please contact me at [youngdisciples@hopeeagle.org](mailto:youngdisciples@hopeeagle.org) if you are a primary leader or adult leader of your congregation interested in bringing youth to the Gathering coming up in the summer of 2018. I will add you to our Gathering Synod Email list and happily answer any questions you may have. Be sure to like our Facebook page, "Eastern Washington Idaho Synod Youth & Family Leadership" to stay connected. To learn more information about the Gathering and pre-gathering events, please visit [www.elca.org/YouthGathering](http://www.elca.org/YouthGathering).

In Christ,

*Casey Cross*

# 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>D</b> Deacon
<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	Supply	SP
P	Davenport, WA - Zion	NV	Stacey Friedlein	TEEM
P	Ephrata, WA - Holy Trinity	NV	Karen Edwards	I
P	Genesee, ID - Genesee/St. John	A	Supply	
P	Goldendale, WA – Christ the King	NV	Mary Johnson	SP
P	Leavenworth, WA - Faith	NV	Misael Fajardo-Perez	I
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	B	Phylis Stromme	I
P	Quincy, WA - St. Paul Lutheran	NV	Karen Edwards	I
P	Spokane, WA – Bethlehem Lutheran	NV	Steve Wee	SP
P	Spokane, WA – Messiah Lutheran	NV	Betty Krafft	SP
P	Spokane, WA – Prince of Peace	A	Bob Chenault	I
P	Spokane, WA – St. Mark’s Lutheran	B	Eric Dull Kate LePard	CP

Paul Malek was ordained and installed to Bethel Lutheran - Firth, ID February 19, 2017

Pastor Barbara Harrison-Condon has been called and accepted the role of Net-Worker for Southern Idaho

## CALM 2017 - March 19-22

This notification is to share that the CALM Conference is being planned and registration is OPEN! If you are familiar with our conference this is the link you've been waiting for...reserve your spot now!

[http://lutheranstaffnw.org/calm-2017-registration/?utm\\_source=Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=-8f5a03340d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_01\\_12&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_215969a-d1a-8f5a03340d-150783453](http://lutheranstaffnw.org/calm-2017-registration/?utm_source=Mailing+List&utm_campaign=-8f5a03340d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_01_12&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_215969a-d1a-8f5a03340d-150783453)

If this is the first you have heard of our conference, here is the quick intro:

For over 50 years, lay staff members (that's non-clergy staff like Office Managers, Secretaries, Youth/Family, Musicians, volunteers) of congregations, churches and specialized agencies have gathered for a few days in the Northwest to learn and laugh, sing and pray, grow in faith and connect with others working in similar ministries. We are so excited to be returning to Camp Lutherhaven on Lake Coeur d'Alene March 19-22! A gorgeous setting with lovely facilities/hospitality...we can hardly wait! Oh, and it gets even better...our keynote speaker is Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee, Lutheran Campus Ministry at Eastern WA University!

The price of \$250 will cover three nights and all meals. This was just a quick teaser to get the ball rolling. More information regarding workshops and theme will be coming very soon! Questions? Email us at [lutheranstaff@gmail.com](mailto:lutheranstaff@gmail.com)

# 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 . . .*



The family and friends of Dee Watrous, at the time of her death. Dee died peacefully on Monday, February 6 with family at her bedside, after an extended hospitalization. Please keep the family in your prayers. The funeral has been set tentatively for February 25 at Lord of Life - Kennewick, WA. All are welcome.

Pastor Ginny Johnson and her family, on the recent death of her mother.

*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.

## The Region 1 Financial Services Office Has Moved

The address for submitting Mission Support remains unchanged at:

*Their new physical address is:*

4306 132nd St SE  
Mill Creek, WA 98012

PO Box 94432  
Seattle, WA 98124-6732

*New Phone Numbers are:*

P: 206-624-0093  
F: 206-626-0987

# Save the Date

## 2017 Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Assembly

Friday May 19 through Sunday May 21 - Doubletree Hotel ~ Spokane, WA

Theme: *"grace draws us in, grace sends us out."*

### COMMUNICATING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Puzzled by the digital age? Websites, Facebook, Snapchat, Instant Messaging and all the rest? Learn about the various online communication tools that are out there. More and more organizations, businesses, and churches are using these tools to share information about their activities and programs. What are the options for your congregation? How can you use these tools for outreach and to stay in touch with members? Don't miss out! You can also use these tools to stay in touch with family and friends wherever they are!

The session will be led by Senior Digital Marketing Strategist Joanne Fleming,

Location: Central Lutheran Church, 512 S. Bernard in Spokane  
Saturday, March 11 from 10 am - 3 pm

Come join us! Open to the public. No limit on seating.

A fee of \$25 covers the cost for the day and lunch. Contact: Betty Krafft, [bkrafft@spocom.com](mailto:bkrafft@spocom.com), 509-768-3138

## Reports and Forms, Forms and Reports

Reports to the Bishop for those on the roster are available on the ELCA website: <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>. Under the Synod tab, please download the appropriate form, SAVE it to your computer. Fill out the form SAVE again and send it as an attachment.

Parochial Reports were mailed to each congregation in mid-December. You will find your congregation ID number and password on the paper copy mailed. You are encouraged to file the form electronically on the ELCA website: <https://webapps.elca.org/FormAAndC/Login.aspx>

If needed, please call the Synod office to request your ID number and password. Our goal is to have 100% of our parochial reports submitted. The information submitted is used and is a valuable resource for planning.

Mission Support forms were mailed to each congregation. It is helpful for planning purposes for the Synod office to receive these. If you haven't submitted yours, please do. You may download the form and either mail or email to the Synod office. <http://ewaidssynod.org/home.html>

Congregational Leader forms were mailed to each congregation. If you have recently elected new leaders, please send us updated information. The downloadable form is available: <http://ewaidssynod.org/resources>

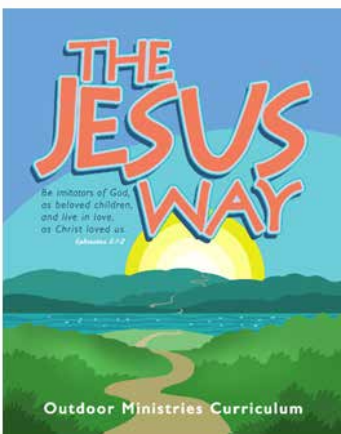
## VBS Curriculum- FREE for all ELCA Congregations New Outdoor Ministry Curriculum Also Available

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) produces the curriculum each year that is used in camp and retreat settings and for Vacation Bible Schools and day camps. This year, LOM is offering their 2016 VBS Bundle of "The Jesus Way" free to ELCA congregations.

To repeat: Special for this year only, the VBS Bundle of the 2016 LOM Curriculum "The Jesus Way" is FREE for all ELCA congregations—yes, free! Each year the LOM curriculum provides a quality alternative for VBS curriculum at an affordable price. The bundle includes Bible study activities, crafts, and games for preschool children, and upper and lower elementary aged youth. Also included are planning documents, including Biblical and theme background information. To order the curriculum, visit [www.lomnetwork.org](http://www.lomnetwork.org).

LOM has also released its 2017 curriculum entitled "The Water of Life." Three Christian education basics—God's creation, Christian community, and faith formation—come together in "The Water of Life." Participants will dive into five Bible stories and daily themes that shower them with new awareness of how water and life are gifts from God. The curriculum will also give participants an opportunity to reflect on baptism, the sacrament that overflows with meaning about being cleansed, invited into a faith community, and led to do God's mission in the world.

Included in the full curriculum package are five day Bible study sessions for Preschool, Upper and Lower Elementary, Junior High, Senior High, and Adult, as well as games, crafts, worship resources, environmental activities, and team-building activities. "The Water of Life" is also available in other small bundles designed for Youth Ministry and VBS settings.



"The Water of Life" is available for purchase and download on the LOM website at [www.lomnetwork.org](http://www.lomnetwork.org). Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is an association of outdoor ministry organizations dedicated to encouraging, equipping, educating, and empowering bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the Church and in the world.





## “Luther and the West” is now available online for **FREE**

A new Northwestern University Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is now available for free on the internet. The course is called “Luther and the West” and offers an educational resource for this year’s celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The course is taught by Christine Helmer, who is an internationally known Luther scholar, and Professor of Religious Studies and German at Northwestern University in Evanston, USA. Prof. Helmer is also an alumna of LSTC (MA 89), an ELCA member.

This course is about the impact that Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, had on major ideas in the history of the west. You will encounter ideas such as freedom and slavery, biblical interpretation and anti-Judaism, politics and economics. In addition to Luther, you will meet important thinkers, such as Baruch Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, and Martin Luther King Jr. The course includes 36 video lectures by Professor Helmer, in addition to many texts by Luther and others that you can download for free. You can connect with other learners in discussing the course material.

If you are interested in using this course as a resource in your community could you please post the following links in forums that may be shared with pastors and church leaders in your community?

The promotional video provides information about the course. The link is <https://vimeo.com/183541655>

The course link is <https://www.coursera.org/learn/luther-and-the-west>

The bitly URL is <http://bit.ly/2ki9OFe>

A new post to the NISynod.org site which integrates all the above sites is - <http://nisynod.org/free-luther-and-the-west-online-course/>

**SAVE THE DATES • HOST A TABLE**



**2017 Deepening Our Roots**

**Benefit Lunch**

**Friday, March 10**

Buffet begins 11:45 a.m. • Program 12-1 p.m.

**Benefit Breakfast**

**Wednesday, March 15**

Buffet begins 7:15 a.m. • Program 7:30-8:30 a.m.

**BOTH are at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University**

*The breakfast and luncheon are complimentary.  
Guests will be invited to donate to support The Fig Tree.*

**CALL 535-4112 or 535-1813**

email [mary@thefigtree.org](mailto:mary@thefigtree.org)

The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane WA 99202

**ASK ABOUT HOSTING A TABLE**

**EASTERN  
WASHINGTON  
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

314 S. Spruce St., Suite A  
Spokane, WA 99201-5823  
509-838-9871



**March 2017  
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.ewaidsynod.org/synodpublications.html>.  
*Deadline for articles is the 5th of each month.*

**Synod Calendar**

**February 2017**

- 19 Paul Malek Ordination
- 25 Annual LCS Luncheon in Boise

**March 2017**

- 10 Fig Tree Benefit Lunch  
Cataldo Hall - Gonzaga University
- 11 Digital Media Workshop  
Central Lutheran Church - Spokane, WA
- 15 Fig Tree Benefit Breakfast  
Cataldo Hall - Gonzaga University

**April 2017**

- 28-30 Faith Forming Catechumenate  
Grace Lutheran - Wenatchee, WA



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

**Staff**

- Bishop ..... The Rev. Martin Wells
- Director for Evangelical Missions .. The Rev. Helga Jansons
- Program Administrator ..... Cathy Steiner
- Assembly Manager ..... Julia Bennett
- Communication Director ..... Gib Dominguez
- Net-Worker ..... Rev. Phylis Stromme
- Net-Worker ..... Rev. David Kappus
- Net-Worker ..... Rev. Barbara Harrison-Condon

# THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

EDITOR: CYNTHIA WOOLEVER—WWW.THEPARISHPAPER.COM

March 2017—Volume 25, Number 3

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## GUIDE TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

After months of meetings, the long-range planning committee of Epiphany Church submitted a report to the congregation's board. The report highlighted three important conclusions: (1) the average age of regular worship attendees is going up while worship attendance overall continues to decline; (2) action steps must be taken immediately; and (3) major changes are needed in ministry priorities. After careful review, the board laid out five possible courses of action. How did Epiphany Church board members respond? They chose sides, with each action plan attracting supporters and opponents. How are they going to move forward and make decisions?

### Governance or Ministry?

Governance is how we make decisions as a congregation. Typically, the board takes responsibility for big-picture issues and works to help the congregation achieve its mission. The board accepts responsibility for keeping the church's resources—people, money, and property—safe. The board also pursues ways to creatively leverage resources to more effectively serve the congregation's mission.

Ministry is different from governance, even if the same people do both. We know many people in the congregation who wear two hats, serving on the board *and* working in the church's food pantry. Ministry is all the other things a congregation does: offering meaningful worship, educational and spiritual development groups, community service, and outreach. Dan Hotchkiss suggests a simple way to understand the difference: governance produces words on paper while ministry produces action.<sup>1</sup>

Why is the distinction important? Churches often feel great about their ministries and concentrate on their programs. However, they tend to spend less time ensuring that the way they govern does not impede the growth and vitality of those same ministries. Dysfunctional governance structures can create an inward focus, a resistance to change, complacency, arrogance, and diffuse accountability.

### Signs of Healthy Governance

Congregations may try to borrow organizational models from businesses or nonprofits. However, congregations are different from these organizations and they must work to customize an appropriate decision-making structure. Further, there is no one right way for churches to make decisions. Rather, the structure must be a good fit for the values, beliefs, faith tradition, and size of the church. Regardless of these differences, Hotchkiss outlines several principles of good governance.<sup>2</sup>

- *Unified structure for making governance decisions.* Typically, an elected board clarifies the church's mission, vision, and strategic issues. In most cases, the board delegates to others the authority to achieve these goals and monitors that those members with authority use their gifts responsibly.
- *Unified structure for making operational decisions.* In most congregations, full- or part-time staff assumes responsibility for programs, assisted by lay leaders. Supervision can come from staff,



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committee chairs, or team leaders. The board delegates authority to these staff and members to carry out the church's ministries.

Congregations adopt a structure that generally arises from the church's size. Size, as measured by church attendance and participation, affects all aspects of organizational behavior. Hotchkiss identifies three common forms, clearly associated with church size, and each with pros and cons.<sup>3</sup> No single structure is perfect.

*The board-centered congregation.* This type is common in small churches. Committee chairs, a secretary and/or treasurer, clergy person, and maybe one or more at-large members fill board seats. Although the board is responsible for the overall mission, committee chairs are tempted to "represent" their program, creating a mild conflict of interest. Program administration and issues take center stage at meetings. The smaller the congregation, the more time is required to make decisions that move the church toward ministry effectiveness.

*The committee-centered congregation.* This structure appears most often in churches with 100 to 400 attendees. Hotchkiss describes its essential trait: both the planning (governance) and actions (ministry) are delegated to appropriate committees by the board. The board rarely grasps the reins of their governance role. Instead, the board listens to reports and leaves strong leadership to others. In some instances when conflict arises, the staff and other leaders become triangulated.

*The staff-centered congregation.* In large churches, full-time staff takes on more organizational and governance work. This structure's effectiveness depends on the quality and gifts of a small number of leaders, making it unstable in the long run. On the plus side, this model can also maximize the opportunities for members to be involved in ministry.

Because no advice fits all, congregations must discern the governance form that best reflects their values and purposes. If the congregation feels called to spread the Gospel through outreach, then their governance would be organized for evangelism. If the congregation emphasizes advocacy and social justice efforts, then their governance structure would be organized to achieve those purposes.

### Common Mistakes

There are some patterns that rarely work in any church. The mistakes listed below point to some of the biggest offenses.

*Large boards.* The governing board should be comprised of 6 to 8 members and rarely should the board seat more than 12 people. Larger boards find it difficult to keep all members fully engaged, attendance is spotty, participation is low, and many attend unprepared.<sup>4</sup>

*Too many committees.* Most churches benefit from mobilizing ministry teams to accomplish their mission (see "How Ministry Teams Get Things Done," *The Parish Paper*, January 2016). Rarely does a congregation need more than four standing committees: Finance, Personnel, Governance, and Nominating.<sup>5</sup>

*Weak agendas.* The central agenda item should be big questions that require discussion. Some churches divide the agenda into two sections: (1) items requiring little or no discussion (minutes, approval of treasurer reports) that can be dealt with quickly as a set; and (2) discussion-only items. Discussion on new proposals should occur over several months before board members are asked to vote. They should never be asked to vote during the meeting in which the possible change is first presented.

*Ministry separated from money.* The governance structure should not facilitate separating members into financial-only and ministry-only teams. All ministry efforts require resources and good stewardship. Likewise, financial decisions should reflect the church's values and priorities. Failure to integrate money and ministry can create power-needy leaders who exercise veto power in congregational decisions.

### From Good to Great

Governance is always difficult in congregations. The Gospel compels churches to be part of transforming individuals, communities, and the world. Yet to carry out that commandment requires some level of institutional stability. Hotchkiss summarizes this tension between stability and instability: "The stability of a religious institution is a necessary precondition to the instability religious transformation brings."<sup>6</sup> With this in mind, ask yourself: How does our governance structure allow us to focus on our church's mission? How does it facilitate or impede our ministry efforts?

1. Dan Hotchkiss, *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership, 2nd edition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 50.

2. *Ibid.*, 6.

3. *Ibid.*, 30-40.

4. *Ibid.*, 81.

5. *Ibid.*, 56.

6. *Ibid.*, 1.