

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.

December 2017

Of all the names for Jesus listed in the Bible, the one that means the most to me this time of year is Emmanuel. Emmanuel: God with us. GOD with us. God WITH us. God with US. No matter where you choose to place the emphasis, something important and infinitely precious is being communicated.

That God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth would choose to make himself so vulnerable as to come into our violent, disrespectful, destructive world as a baby—to be with us? If that doesn't stop you in your tracks: you're not paying attention. That God would become incarnate—literally to become fleshed—to share this world with us, not so that he could then say, “Yeah, I know. Life can really be the pits. This one time? One of my best friends totally stabbed me in the back...” But rather so that he could say, “I will deliver you from this. I will take on this brokenness, and I will give you my wholeness. I will take on your despair, and give you my hope. I will take on the powers of darkness that surround you, so that you, beloved one, can walk in the light.” What do we do with love like that?

It turns out: it's too much. It's too much to bear, being loved so completely. It makes it hard to breathe. So we bring trees into our houses, wrap them in lights, tell our children stories about a fat guy and chimneys and reindeer. We give one another gifts and sing songs about the Baby Jesus, and we allow this love to only exist at the peripheries of our holiday because if it gets too close: then all is lost. All is lost. All our illusions of control and competence and free will and good choices and all of the rest of it will be taken away by a God-baby who comes with no other goal than to love us, in spite of ourselves. This sweet Babe of Bethlehem, with ears like the swirled interiors of seashells and hands like stars will hear us call for his blood, and his death. Those hands will be pierced for our sake, because we don't know how to react to a love without limits and without conditions. We will kill him because he dares become what we are, and love us anyway. He knows it. We know it.

And he comes anyway.

This is truly what Emmanuel means. An unstoppable drive to be with the ones He loves, no matter what. To know that we will betray him, replace him, deny him, ignore him, compartmentalize him, weaponize him, hate him—and still he comes. Relentlessly pursuing us with love that it is painful to contemplate. *What wondrous love is this, o my soul, o my soul?*

It is the love of Christ. Given in water, bread, and wine. Relentlessly pursuing those who are his own, no matter what. Merry Christmas, beloved ones. Emmanuel is with us.

+Bishop Kristen



Presiding bishop

Living in a broken world

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



As I write this the Gulf Coast and Florida are starting the long recovery after hurricanes Harvey and Irma; Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are mostly without electricity and running low on water, food, medicine and gasoline after Hurricane Maria. All of us are reeling from the horrific mass shooting in Las Vegas. There are no words. We are stunned almost to the point of numbness.

We try to make sense out of the incomprehensible. It's climate change. It's not climate change. We need more stringent gun control. We need to protect the Second Amendment. The federal government doesn't do enough. The local government doesn't do enough. Soon we're talking *at* each other, not *to* each other.

Natural disasters feel chaotic and capricious. The weather service has gotten pretty sophisticated in predicting paths of hurricanes but is not completely accurate. Tornadoes strike with little warning. Is this just the way of the natural world, or is God visiting judgment upon us? There is human involvement that can make natural disasters more damaging.

The youth group in the last parish I served went on a work-week each summer. We did cleanup and rebuilding after tornadoes, floods and hurricanes in partnership with Lutheran Disaster Response and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I guarantee that it was the poor whose homes were in the floodplain, who did not have the resources to rebuild and had to depend on volunteer labor.


Evil perpetrated by human beings is a great mystery. How can a good and just God allow evil? Why would a man open fire on concertgoers, killing 59 and wounding more than 500? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do good things happen to bad people? There have been various theodicies trying to make sense of this throughout human existence. I confess to you that I have no conclusive answer to these questions, except that we live in a broken world.

Paul wrote: "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now ..." (Romans 8:21-22). Though God created the heavens and the earth and declared the creation good, this is no longer a perfect world.

Paul also wrote: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

Both of Paul's assertions are true. We live in a broken world—natural and human made, marred by human sin—and we rejoice in the Lord who is near and guards us with God's peace.

Bishop Terry Brandt of the Eastern North Dakota Synod reminded us of this truth and this tension in his sermon to the Conference of Bishops the morning after the Las Vegas shooting. And he reminded us that when Paul was doing all that rejoicing, he was doing it from prison, awaiting execution after already enduring beatings, shipwreck, hunger and thirst. I wouldn't describe Paul as perky, but the joy he found in Jesus made him able to live in hope and believe in life even in the face of despair and death.

So, dear church, we pray and lament and trust and hope. We stake our lives on the belief that God's life, hope and love are not platitudes, but the truth. We are moved to action and reconciliation. And when the next disaster or massacre happens, we do not lose hope because the Crucified One has been raised from the dead. 

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

This column originally appeared in the November 2017 issue of *Living Lutheran*. Reprinted with permission.

Diakonia

Diakonia is a Greek word meaning service. The Diakonia Guild is a group of women who provide volunteer and financial support to help Lutheran Community Services NW. The Spokane Guild meets the 4th Tuesday of each month from September through May at various Lutheran Churches. The Cheney Guild meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month from October through May at Emmanuel Lutheran in Cheney. Both groups provide help with fundraisers, as well as through giving of items, offerings and prayers. LCSNW staff are invited to come to the meetings to give information on the various programs and services they provide.

New members are always welcome!

Please contact Patti Berg (Spokane) at 509-443-9170
or Mary Henningsen (Cheney) at 509-448-3412 for more information.

¿Puede Ayudar? - Can You Help?

Amigos en Cristo,

Me gustaría preparar un “nuevo” folleto en español para que nuestras congregaciones lo usen. El primer folleto que preparé fue en gran medida una comparación entre la fe luterana y la fe católica, que probablemente sigue siendo útil para varias situaciones. Sin embargo, sería útil tener un folleto que invitase a los latinos que tienen poca o ninguna historia en la iglesia. Para este folleto, quisiera incluir algunas breves historias que podrían ser tituladas, “Por qué Soy Luterana” (en contraposición a algún otro tipo de cristiano). Este folleto no tendría mucha “teología”, sino más bien atraería a la gente a venir y averiguar más sobre los luteranos latinos. El primer folleto podría ser más útil, una vez que han venido a visitarnos.

Desde que nací en esta iglesia, no tengo una historia propia para compartir. ¿Serían aquellos de ustedes que se unieron a la iglesia luterana como jóvenes o adultos dispuestos a compartir su historia de por qué son luteranos (tan brevemente como sea posible)? Si puedes escribirlo en el texto de un correo electrónico, puedo cortarlo y pegarlo en un folleto. Lo que estoy buscando son tres o cuatro cuentos sobre cómo diferentes personas han encontrado una “comunidad de fe” en la Iglesia Luterana. ¡Gracias!

Pastor Ron Nitz,

Arbol de Vida Iglesia Luterana, Yakima

internitz@juno.com

509-453-7294 (O) or 509-834-9702 (C)

Friends in Christ,

I would like to prepare a “new” brochure in Spanish for our congregations to use. The first brochure I prepared was largely a comparison of the Lutheran faith vs. the Catholic faith, which is probably still useful for a number of situations. However, it would be helpful to have a brochure that was inviting to Latino people who have little or no church background at all. For this brochure, I would like to include a few brief stories that could be entitled, “Why I Am a Lutheran” (as opposed to some other kind of Christian). This brochure would not have much “theology”, but rather would entice people to come and find out more about Latino Lutherans. The first brochure might be more useful, once they have come to check us out.

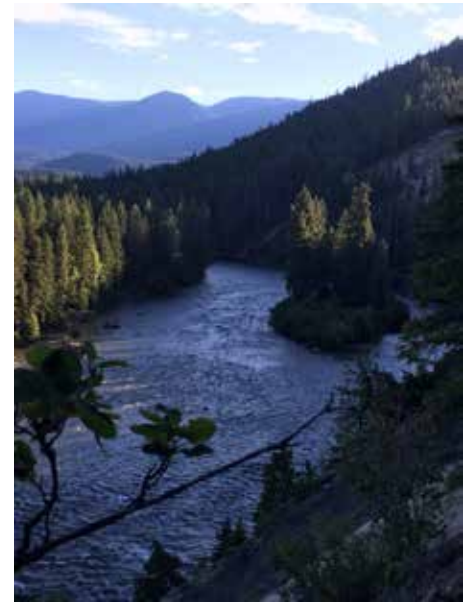
Since I was born into this church, I do not have a story of my own to share. Would those of you who joined the Lutheran church as youth or adults be willing to share your story of why you are a Lutheran (as briefly as possible)? If you can write it into the text of an email, I can cut-and-paste it into a brochure. What I am looking for are three or four short stories about how different people have found a “faith community” in the Lutheran Church. Thank you!

Pastor Ron Nitz,

Arbol de Vida/Tree of Life Lutheran Church, Yakima

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Group Retreats at the Grünewald Guild

Our beautiful campus, cozy facilities, and affordable rates make the Grünewald Guild an ideal location for your next retreat. The Guild's inclusive community has hosted a variety of church and school retreats, training sessions, and leadership workshops.

Our housing can accommodate groups of up to 35 people, and we offer comfortable meeting spaces suitable for a wide range of activities. Shared community meals invite close relationships and conversation, while a variety of contemplative spaces provide opportunities for individual reflection as well as group gatherings.

Retreat availability runs September through May. Discounted rates are available in December, January, February and March. More information here - <https://grunewaldguild.com/group-retreats/>.

"River Flow" Summer Program at the Grünewald Guild - June 17 - August 11, 2018

Summer at the Grünewald Guild is a time to embrace your creative spirit, explore your sacred journey, and engage in nurturing community.

This year's classes include familiar favorites as well as new offerings, all taught by our world-class faculty with an average class size of just seven students.

Newcomers and old friends alike say our intimate and inclusive community is what makes the Guild so unique. Throughout the week, you'll be able to enjoy communal meals, ecumenical worship, and plenty of opportunities for casual conversation and sharing. You are welcome to take part in all activities, or spend time alone in creativity, rest, and reflection.

And of course, our beautiful location in the North Central Cascades provides inspiration for art-making, reflection, and exploration.

More information here - <https://grunewaldguild.com/programs/summer-program-2018/>

Sacred Arts Week at the Grünewald Guild - April 29 - May 5, 2018

Sacred Arts Week is a time to gather and envision new possibilities for creativity and the sacred. This year's classes include Silk Painting: Nature's Sacred Moods with Kristen Gilje, Writing & Telling Your Cultural Story with Tamisha Tyler, Thin Places & Photo Creativity with Chuck Kirchner, and Acrylic & Mixed Media on Cradleboard with Scott Burnett. More details here - <https://grunewaldguild.com/sacred-arts-week-2018/>.

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	D Deacon
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	Cheney, WA – Emmanuel Lutheran	A	Ward Robak	I
P	Cheney, WA – Campus Ministry EWU	A		
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	A	Bob Edwards	SP
P	Colville, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	C	Doug Stensby	I
P	Davenport, WA - Zion Lutheran	NV	Stacey Friedlein	TEEM
P	Davenport (Egypt), WA – Christ Lutheran	NV	Stacey Friedlein	SP
P	Ephrata, WA - Holy Trinity	B	Teresia Calene	SP
P	Goldendale, WA – Christ the King	NV	Mary Johnson	SP
P	Kennewick, WA – First Lutheran	NV	Alan Berg	I
P	Leavenworth, WA - Faith Lutheran	B	Misael Fajardo-Perez	I
P	Lind, WA – Good Hope Lutheran	NV	Ginny Johnson	I
P	Mattawa, WA – Grace Lutheran	NV	Ginny Kreckling	I
P	Otis Orchards, WA – Peace Lutheran	A	David Olson	TM
P	Quincy, WA - St. Paul Lutheran	B	Teresia Calene	SP
P	Spokane, WA – St. Mark's Lutheran	A	Eric Dull Kate LePard	CP
P	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	NV		
P	Sunnyside, WA – Our Saviour's	NV		
P	Twin Falls, ID – Our Savior	B	Dick Sansgaard	SP

Is it time to refinance?

The Mission Investment Fund is offering a 3.875% APY rate

If your congregation or ministry is looking to refinance an existing loan, this may be the time to proceed. The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), the ELCA's lending ministry, is offering a 3.875% APY (Annual Percentage Yield) rate, available through October 31, 2017, on a Five-Year Adjustable-Rate Mortgage.

In addition to refinancing existing debt, MIF loans are available for a variety of capital projects—from new construction to additions and renovations, as well as land and building purchases. Adjustable- and Fixed-Rate loan options are available.

For information on MIF ministry loans and investment opportunities:

Visit mif.elca.org

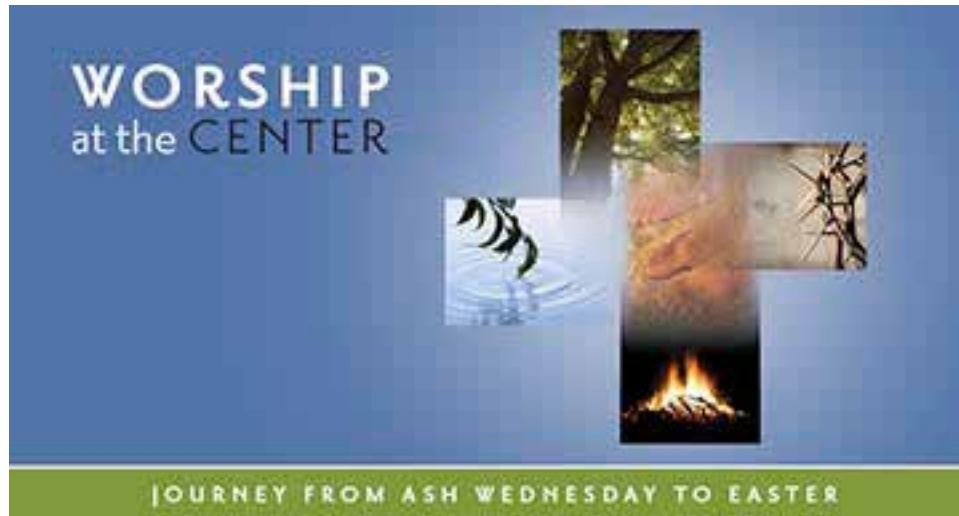
Contact MIF Customer Service at **877-886-3522**

Contact your MIF Regional Manager, Joel S. Wudel at joel.wudel@elca.org or (773) 682-1765.



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

Continuing Education Event



This coming January/February, you have the opportunity to attend “Worship at the Center: Journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter.” During these days, we will worship using the services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter, and join in reflection, study, and discussion of the cross and empty tomb, baptism and the Bible—the meaning of this journey for ourselves and the world.

Come and be refreshed in your planning and leading of these worship services that are central to our worship together as Christ’s church!

January 18-20, 2018 at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Winter Park, Florida

February 1-3, 2018 at St. Martin’s Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas

For details of the event and to register, visit <https://elca.org/en/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Worship/Worship-at-the-Center>
For questions, contact BethAnn Lynch at 773-380-2590.

From Your Synod Staff

*We wish you the blessings
of a joyous Advent.*

Bishop Kristen Kuempel,
Net-Workers Rev. Phylis Stromme, Rev. Davis Kappus and Rev. Barbara Harrison-Condon
Assembly Manager Julia Bennett
Cathy Steiner and Gib Dominguez

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 of Jeanette Manor, mother of Cathy Steiner, on her recent death.

The family of Rev. Gordon Braun, on his recent death.

The family of Rev. Keith Krebs, on his recent death.

For our faith communities in call process, listed below:

Cheney, WA – Emmanuel Lutheran

Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran

Davenport, WA - Zion Lutheran

Ephrata, WA - Holy Trinity

Kennewick, WA – First Lutheran

Lind, WA – Good Hope Lutheran

Otis Orchards, WA – Peace Lutheran

Spokane, WA – St. Mark's Lutheran

Sunnyside, WA – Our Saviour's

Cheney, WA – Campus Ministry EWU

Colville, WA – St. Paul Lutheran

Davenport (Egypt), WA – Christ Lutheran

Goldendale, WA – Christ the King

Leavenworth, WA - Faith Lutheran

Mattawa, WA – Grace Lutheran

Quincy, WA - St. Paul Lutheran

Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran

Twin Falls, ID – Our Savior

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.

Director for Evangelical Mission

The Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod will be seeking a Director for Evangelical Mission. This position represents the Domestic Mission (DM) unit in the territory of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod, and is responsible for engaging synodical leaders, structures and strategies in the formation and development of evangelical congregations grounded in faith formation, discipleship and faith practices, and reflects the purposes, principles and commitments of the synod, DM and the ELCA as a whole. This position will coordinate and staff the education of all evangelical mission, mission support and stewardship ministry in the synod through the formation and coordination of three synodical initiatives:

1. mission support and/or stewardship;
2. new and renewing congregation; and
3. synod mission strategy

For a full description for this position, please go the ELCA website: <http://www.elca.org/careers>

Administration Matters

<http://blogs.elca.org/adminmatters/index-of-the-november-2017-issue/>

Our First Call Rostered Ministers and Bishop Kuempel at First Call Theological Education Seabeck, Washington



Bishop Kristen and the first call rostered leaders from EWAID joined the bishops and first call leaders from Alaska, Northwest WA, Southwest WA, and Oregon for First Call Theological Education. FCTE is a requirement for all rostered leaders in their first three years of ministry. Pictured from l-r: Pastor Gina Herman (New Day Lutheran Community); Pastor John Guthridge (Emmanuel: Grandview); Deacon Dave Hellerich (Christ: Yakima); Bishop Kristen; Pastor Paul Malek (Bethel: Firth); Pastor Inger Hanson (Shepherd of the Mountains: Jackson, WY); Deacon Kat Tigerman (House Next Door: Nampa); Justin Tigerman (Faith: Caldwell); Stacey Friedlin (TEEM candidate: Davenport).



EASTERN WASHINGTON IDAHO SYNOD

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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December 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

November 2017

23-24 Synod Office Closed - Thanksgiving

December 2017

1-2 Estate Planning for the Heart
Lord of Life - Pasco, WA
24 Christmas Eve - Go To Church
25 Synod Office Closed - Christmas
26-29 Synod Office Closed - If you need assistance,
please call and leave a message



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

Staff

Bishop The Rev. Kristen E.M. Kuempel
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

December 2017—Volume 25, Number 12

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DOES OUR PASTOR NEED A JOB DESCRIPTION?

“I love our pastor and his family, but I don’t know if I can sit through another one of his sermons!” Other members made similar remarks that eventually reached the ears of Paul, chair of the personnel committee, who was asked to call a meeting to deal with members’ growing frustration. Paul felt nervous about setting up an unexpected meeting with the pastor because the personnel committee typically meets only once a year. However, the committee had never discussed with the pastor their expectations about sermon preparation vs. other priorities and time commitments.

What Are Our Expectations?

Serving a church without a written job description is like embarking on a long trip without a road map. Too many churches have no evaluation process in place for the pastor. Additionally, there is often not a personnel committee (or staff-parish relations or pastoral relations committee) or, if there is one, it meets only “as needed.”

Why does the congregation need a committee that deals with clergy/staff and member relationships? Simply put: the church cannot succeed unless the pastor also succeeds. The committee’s central role is to clarify expectations on both sides. If communication lines are down, the result is confusion, disappointment, and possibly conflict. The committee helps the pastor, lay leaders, and members do a better job in their ministries. Regular communication adds years of effective tenure to the pastor’s ministry with the church. Additionally, the regular interaction contributes to the pastor’s overall ministry satisfaction and the pastor learns things about the church that he or she would never learn otherwise.

How to Create a Job Description

Perhaps lay leaders resist developing a pastoral job description because they falsely believe that all pastors are alike: interchangeable parts in the larger church system. Or maybe they feel that as members they do not know as much about the specifics as clergy would

know. However, the goal is for lay leaders and the pastor to work together to design a position portrait that fits the unique values and priorities of their church. In the church context, a pastoral job description serves as a shared vision for the congregation’s ministries. It gives details to the covenant that both members and the pastor hope to fulfill. In crafting this covenant, ask the pastor to provide answers to the following eight questions.

1. Describe in two or three sentences the purpose of your position: what goals that relate to the church’s overall mission can be accomplished through your responsibilities?
2. List and describe three activities that require the largest percentage of your time. What percentage of your time do you estimate each of those activities consumes?
3. List and describe other activities that take up less of your time (occasionally, monthly, or annually).
4. What are your top priorities; what activities do you feel are most important?



“WHEN ASKED TO LIST PROBLEM AREAS THAT TAKE UP MOST OF HIS TIME, THE PASTOR LISTED 3... AND MISSPELLED HAROLD’S NAME TWICE.”

5. Among your responsibilities, which roles and goals give you the most satisfaction?
6. Over what decisions do you have direct authority?
7. If applicable, list and describe any responsibilities for supervising the work of or guiding other employees, church volunteers, or committees.
8. What special knowledge or skills are needed in your position?¹

Once the pastor gives his or her responses to the committee, hold a meeting where the pastor and lay committee members discuss and clarify the answers. The committee leadership then drafts a description to be reviewed with the pastor for clarification or correction. Next, the governing board receives the position description and examines whether the wording captures the congregation's understanding of the pastor's role.² Eventually, the entire congregation should be given the opportunity to look at the description and make comments and suggestions.

Responsibilities of the Personnel Committee

The work of facilitating optimal pastor/member relationships should be a top priority for any church. If these relationships aren't right, everything else in the church's ministry will suffer. A thoughtfully constructed framework for each meeting is essential; otherwise, discussion can emphasize the negative and offer no constructive action steps.

In terms of best practices, the committee meets six times a year and at regularly scheduled times. Comprise this committee of duly elected lay members plus the senior pastor. Apply three-year term limits to elected lay members to protect people from burnout and to avoid the appearance that only a few people in the congregation make all the decisions.

Although committee members get the opportunity to identify areas of conflict or disappointment, a regular meeting also allows the pastor, who attends all meetings, to express opinions about how well the governing board is fulfilling its responsibilities to him or her. A key function of the committee is to offer oversight and promptly respond to any matter related to misconduct (such as sexual harassment, mental health issues, alcohol/drug use, or financial misuse). Their charge is to act in accordance with denominational rules and state/national laws.

Every committee member must attend and participate at every meeting. The chair's role involves facilitating conversation around several questions:

- What one or two good things do you see happening in our church?
- What one congregational challenge do you feel our committee may want to consider discussing?

After each committee member has voiced his or her views, the committee chair identifies one or two items for further discussion. As the chair proceeds down the list, he or she guides the discussion for each issue toward a constructive, consensus-based solution. Next, the chair asks members to review any issues from their last meeting. Then, the chair closes the meeting with prayer. Do not allow any committee member to bring up a new concern toward the end of the meeting when there is not sufficient time for a full discussion of the matter, but remind the member to bring up the concern at the beginning of the next meeting.

Describing the Role for a Future Pastor

When the congregation is moving toward filling a vacancy, an up-to-date clergy job description is even more critical. The position portrait keeps the hiring/search committee focused on the pastoral skills and abilities that are most central to the congregation's ministry. Because this description uses behavior and performance as criteria, it helps a search committee explore what candidates have actually done. Past performance is the best predictor of future behavior.³

Giving Support and Solutions

When Paul convened the personnel committee, he asked each member to list three positive words or phrases to describe the pastor's sermons and then to list phrases suggesting positive changes. After gathering the sheets, Paul read the lists aloud. After discussion, the members supported the pastor's decision to join a local weekly lectionary study group. They also offered support for the several activities the pastor wished to set aside to give him more time for study, prayer, and sermon preparation. Committee members pledged to pray for the pastor and agreed to meet again in two months to assess progress.

1. Additional details in *Church Effectiveness Nuggets: Volume 21*, <https://www.theparishpaper.com/sites/default/files/resources/Church%20Effectiveness%20Nuggets-%20Volume%202021.pdf>.

2. As with all congregational committees, the personnel committee is accountable to the governing board.

3. Rich Birch, "8 Axioms of Church Staff Hiring," <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/310141-8-axioms-church-staff-hiring-rich-birch.html>.