

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 2018

As of March 1, 2018 I will have held the Office of Bishop of the Eastern WA-ID Synod for six months. It feels like a lot longer than that, since discernment around this call began in September of 2016—but the actual work of the call began on Sept. 1, 2017.

When I was in Chicago for my first round of Formation in July, we were all gathered around the table, and the mentor bishops were chatting together like one does with coworkers. And, as often is the case, the conversation turned to various complaints and frustrations and focus on things that weren't going well. Those of us who were new bishops simply sat and listened.

After several minutes of idle chatter, the mentor bishops turned to the rookies and said, "Do you have any questions for us?" I did. I asked them where the joy in their calls were. I sat and listened while they kvetched and vented and nodded sympathetically as they laid out mutual cares. But not one had shared something that had gone well. Something they were excited about. And I wanted to know why.

"What about this call makes you want to keep doing it? What is good about it? Where is the joy?"

This question, to be honest, knocked them back on their heels. They didn't have an answer. Many didn't have an answer until we gathered for our fall Conference of Bishops meeting in October.

I'm not a particularly optimistic person, but I do have this stubborn insistence that if we pay attention to the negative: the negative is what will flourish. If we lift up what brings us joy and life and excitement: that is what will flourish. If you want to talk about how horrible your pastor or bishop or congregation or synod is: then you will indeed have a terrible pastor, bishop, congregation, or synod. That's not to say that the negative doesn't exist. It's to say that's not what we're going to allow to dominate the conversation. We move toward hope. We move toward light. We move toward light.

The last six months have been some of the most challenging months of my life. I was not lied to when I was told the learning curve for this call is steep. I was asked to leap aboard a speeding train and hope I don't get my legs cut out from underneath me. Some days: it felt like I had missed the train all together.

But when people ask me how things are going, I am honest: I am having the best time! Not the easiest time. Not the most fun time. But the best time. I am being challenged, I am learning, and I am exploring, I am visioning, I am partnering, I am exhorting, I am setting boundaries—all of these things are hard, good work.

But my deepest joy in this call has been to gather together with congregations and clusters and simply talk about where we want to go as a synod. To hear fears, certainly—but more often to hear hope and excitement and anticipation of where God might be calling the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod in the future. I have been deeply blessed by honest conversations around how what we've done isn't working anymore, and people's willingness to grapple with some really hard questions about what Church might have to look like in the future. As I travel I am discovering that there are many people in our synod who seem to share the same philosophy that I do: the grass is greener where you water it.

I am humbled to be called to do this work beside you. Thank you for this call, and for your willingness to roll up your sleeves and get to work with me.

Soli Deo Gloria,

+Bishop Kristen



Presiding bishop

A valentine from God

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



“Love means never having to say you’re sorry” (*Love Story*).

“Forgiveness guaranteed. Repentance optional” (sign in front of a Lutheran church).

This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day fall on the same date. It seems like an odd pairing—Ash Wednesday, a day of solemn repentance and honest reckoning of our brokenness, and Valentine’s Day, a lighthearted celebration of love. Do we fast and pray and commit to rigorous spiritual disciplines, or do we dive in to Champagne and chocolate? Is it a day of contrition or of abandon? Do we abstain or do we indulge?

It’s strange how our culture divides up human experience and the way it puts a premium on happiness, self-fulfillment and conflict avoidance, particularly in personal relationships. The good life is untroubled. There should be no worries and certainly no cause to acknowledge pain or wrong. It’s a life of endless possibility fueled by positive thinking and affirmation. It should be perky, upbeat and fun. And somehow love needs to be shaped the same way. Certainly there is no room for Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day in the same space.

The two quotes above are the manifesto for this worldview. They hold out the promise of pain-free, investment-free, responsibility-free relationships. They encourage an unexamined life, a kind of Teflon existence to which consequences don’t stick. They sound like the real thing but are as poor a substitute as the sentiments printed on the little sugar valentine hearts are for a real expression of love. In this world, Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day make no sense together. But here we are. This Feb. 14 will hold two holy days. And, in our life in Christ, they aren’t incompatible but inseparable.


The history of salvation is one extended love story between God and God’s creation, between God and humankind, between God and God’s people. We were created in love for love. Real love.

Love that is solid and deep and unflinching. Love that is true enough to be honest.

God’s work of reconciliation in Christ is God’s eyes-wide-open acknowledgment of human rebellion and sin, the undeniable fact that all is not well no matter how hard we try to fix it or deny it. The remedy was the all-in, complete love of the incarnation, crucifixion and death of Christ. Jesus meets us right in the middle of our pain—the pain we feel and the pain we cause others—and without minimizing the depth of our offense, offers forgiveness and new life. Love does *not* mean never having to say you’re sorry—love means being *able* to say you’re sorry.

Lutherans point out that grace is a gift, but sometimes we get a little carried away. I believe the sign in front of one of our congregations that claimed “Forgiveness guaranteed. Repentance optional” was trying to announce good news. Instead, it sent passers-by in the wrong direction. Our reconciled new life in Christ not only makes it possible for us to strip away any illusion of a whole and holy life that we bring about by ourselves, it compels us to repent.

Theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned us about this cheap grace. He wrote: “Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. ... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate” (*The Cost of Discipleship*).

So, Ash Wednesday is a valentine from God, one that invites us to enter deep into the mystery of true love, honest examination of our lives and the possibility of real repentance. The Ash Wednesday valentine starts us on the journey to the cross, to the passionate love of God shown in the Passion of Christ. And after the cross, the resurrection. No more pretense, freedom. 

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 *Living Lutheran’s* February 2018 issue. Reprinted with permission.



A LENTEN CELEBRATION OF LOCAL WHEAT AND WILD SALMON AT SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Come taste the bounty of Eastern Washington while hearing from farmers, commercial fishermen, Northwest tribal members, and faith leaders about the challenges facing our region's wild fish, Native people, and food producers.

4 March - 1428 W Broadway, Spokane

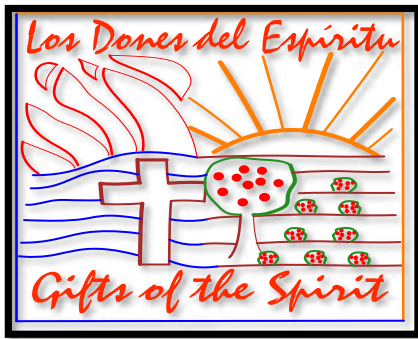
food served at 12pm || program starting at 1pm

Earth Ministry and Save Our Wild Salmon invite you as a member of the faith community to join us for a discussion and light lunch from 12-3pm on Sunday, March 4 at Salem Lutheran Church in Spokane.

This “Loaves and Fishes” gathering will feature farmers, commercial fishermen, Native Americans, and faith leaders coming together to discuss their respective hopes and concerns surrounding salmon recovery in the Columbia Basin. The burden of recovering endangered salmon species falls upon all of us, but most directly affects those at either end of the Northwest’s food production economy: farmers and fishermen.

As people of faith we are called both to respect the Earth and to love our neighbors. We believe that the interests of fishing communities, local farmers, native tribes, and wild salmon can all be served simultaneously. An open dialogue on salmon and dams, barges and irrigation, and treaty rights and recreation is a step toward a more equitable and neighborly Northwest.

Speakers to include Rev. Liv Larson Andrews, wheat farmer Bryan Jones, commercial fisherman Ron Richards, and executive director of Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment Elliott Moffett.



SAVE THE DATE

EASTERN WASHINGTON - IDAHO

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2018

April 27-29, 2018

Yakima, Washington

Yakima Convention Center / Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel

ABOUT ASSEMBLY Join us this April in the heart of scenic central Washington for a weekend of community, communion and celebration. We gather to worship, study, explore, share, serve and celebrate - all while we conduct the annual business of the Synod. Come and *gather* as one body of like mind. Plan to *worship* and *explore* more deeply our unique GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. Study 1 Corinthians 12 as it relates to our shared and individual gifts and ministries. *Share* in dynamic ministry practices and partnerships at work around our Synod. Enjoy opportunities to *serve* in ministry and *celebrate* our shared faith in Christ. This year's Assembly promises to be dynamic, hands on and engaging. Mark your calendars now to join Bishop Kristin Kuempel+, along with Churchwide representative **Reverend Ron Glusenkamp**, at this year's Assembly.

Your registration cost includes meals Friday evening through Sunday morning. Please contact the Assembly Registrar at registrar@ewaidsynod.org for room requests including extra nights or special needs. **DO NOT contact the hotel directly regarding room requests.** If you choose double occupancy and do not list a roommate, one will be assigned to you.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

9:00 AM PRE-ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS
(more info to follow)
NOON REGISTRATION OPENS
12:30 /2:00 PM HEARINGS/WORKSHOPS
4:00 PM OPENING EUCHARIST
6:00 PM GATHERING/SOCIAL
6:30 PM FAMILY-STYLE MEAL
7:15 PM PROGRAM

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

7:00 AM BREAKFAST TABLE TALKS
8:30 AM BUSINESS SESSION I
10:40 AM BUSINESS SESSION II
NOON LUNCH
1:00 PM WORKSHOPS
2:45 PM BUSINESS SESSION III
4:15 PM BUSINESS SESSION IV
6:45 PM DINNER
7:30 PM PROGRAM
9:00 PM EVENING PRAYER

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

7:00 AM BREAKFAST
9:00 AM SHORTS & REPORTS
10:30 AM CLOSING EUCHARIST
12:00 PM ASSEMBLY CLOSES

REGISTRATION COSTS	STANDARD (INCL. ROOM) SINGLE	\$535 / \$460**
** retired rostered clergy	DOUBLE	\$410 / \$335**
	COMMUTER	\$360 / \$285**

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS 2018 Click the links below to learn more about agenda items
[Election of Synod Council positions](#)
[Churchwide voting members](#)
[Voting on Resolutions](#)

FORMS AND REQUESTS Click links below for the appropriate form.
[Scholarship Request](#)
[Nomination Form](#)
[Resolution Form](#)

ASSEMBLY OFFERING 2018 Click [here](#) to learn more about our offering recipients:
 Lutheran Community Services Northwest and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

***** SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR ALL FORMS & EARLY REGISTRATION IS MARCH 15 *****

A Retirement Celebration

for

A True Friend of the Synod

Dennis McGaughy

of

Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM

Please RSVP by reserving a ticket no later than 3/9 or calling Katie at (509)343-5078.

The McGinnity Room

116 West Pacific Avenue, #100

Spokane, WA 99201

WE'RE MOVING

There is no hard date set yet for the move, but tentatively, we'll be at Paulsen House, working beside our Episcopal neighbors, Bishop Rehburg and her staff on March 1, 2018.

**Our new address will be
245 E 13th Ave, Suite A, Spokane, WA 99202**

Lutheran Staff Association Retreat

The 2018 Lutheran Staff Association Retreat March 11-14. Sunday evening of March 11 through the Wednesday morning. Cost will be approximately \$250. Our quest speaker is Pastor Janine Goodrich who serves American Lutheran Church in Newport, WA. The subject is Boundaries – both in relationships and as it relates to church safety. The conference will be at Lutherhaven in Coeur d'Alene, ID. LSA aka CALM -Conference of Associated Lay Ministers is an ecumenical lay staff gathering. Registration details will posted on the CALM website soon.

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	C	Ward Robak I
P	Cheney, WA – Campus Ministry EWU	C	
P	Chewelah, WA – St. Paul Lutheran	A	Bob Edwards SP
P	Davenport, WA - Zion Lutheran	NV	Stacey Friedlein TEEM
P	Davenport (Egypt), WA – Christ Lutheran	NV	Stacey Friedlein SP
P	Ephrata, WA - Holy Trinity	C	Ethan Bergman SP
P	Goldendale, WA – Christ the King	NV	Mary Johnson SP
P	Kennewick, WA – First Lutheran	A	Alan Berg I
P	Leavenworth, WA - Faith Lutheran	B	Misael Fajardo-Perez I
P	Mattawa, WA – Grace Lutheran	B	
P	Otis Orchards, WA – Peace Lutheran	A	David Olson TM
P	Quincy, WA - St. Paul Lutheran	C	Ethan Bergman SP
P	Spokane, WA – St. Mark’s Lutheran	B	Eric Dull Kate LePard CP
P	Toppenish, WA – Faith Lutheran	NV	Phylis Stromme I
P	Sunnyside, WA – Our Saviour’s	NV	Phylis Stromme I

ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering

by Charleen Kaaen



The ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering was held in Washington D.C. from January 21-24 at The Lutheran Church of the Reformation. Our synod sent three lay people to participate along with approximately 150 people from 35 states. The theme was “Until All Are Fed.”

The primary goal was to train people for advocacy. We studied the farm bill and were encouraged to share stories to show our support for SNAP (the food stamp program), international food assistance and support for the farmer. The need to honor treaties and respect land claims by indigenous peoples, fund conservation and research programs was also addressed.

After a day of intensive training (during which time the government shut down!) we descended on the capitol to meet with our respective states’ representatives and senators to share our stories. Our elected officials or their legislative assistants on both sides of the issue listened respectfully and we were able to have good conversations. We were encouraged to continue gathering stories and to share them via letters, e-mails and/or visits with our elected officials.

I was very impressed with the work done by our church in training and motivating members to be God’s hands doing His work. And, by the way, both spiritually and literally, we all were fed!

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 . . .

Reverend Albert Gerstmann passed away on January 3, 2018 and services were held on January 11, 2018 at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA. Pastor Gerstmann served Wilbur Lutheran Church in Wilbur, Washington for about 15 years. He was 93 years old.

Prayers for the family of Rev. Frank Woodall, who died Saturday, February 3, 2018.

We pray for peace and comfort for Pastor Walter Klockersand his family. His father, Walter E. Klockers passed away on February 10, 2018.

We pray for Pastor Don Short as he recovers from a medical emergency while attending the Byberg Preaching Conference. He is now home and continuing to recover.

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

SAVE THE DATE

Lutheran Campus Ministry Benefit Dinner
May 5th at Advent Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley

Join us for a Cinco de Mayo Celebration, auction, drinks and hor d'oeuvres followed by dinner and a free-will donation time. All donations can be made before and after the event as well. If you aren't able to attend the event, donation can be sent to the EW-ID synod office, through Karla Geiger-our financial secretary, or sent to Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cheney, WA.

***Tell your friends, family, and colleagues
about this dinner event! Hope to see you there!***

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
IDAHO SYNOD**

of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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



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

**March 2018
Newsletter**



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 2018

- 18 Synod Assembly Meeting - Yakima, WA
- 22 Rural Ministry Resources - Fairfield, WA
- 25 Bishop Kuempel preaches at St. Peter - Spokane

March 2018

- 11-13 Lutheran Staff Association - Lutherhaven
- 12-14 Deans' Retreat
- 15 Deadline - Assembly Resolutions and Nominations
- 18 Cluster F Assembly Meeting
- 20 Synod Assembly Notebook materials deadline
- 30 Good Friday - Synod Office Closed

April 2018

- 15 Cluster G Assembly Meeting
- 26-27 Synod Council - Yakima, WA
- 27-29 Synod Assembly



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

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

EDITORS: CYNTHIA WOOLEVER AND DANA HORRELL—WWW.THEPARISHPAPER.COM

March 2018—Volume 26, Number 3

Copyright © 2018 by Cynthia Woolever

FINDING SIGNIFICANCE AS A SMALL CHURCH

Imagine a company with more than 300,000 small retail outlets, which are locally owned and supported. Their presence is so evenly distributed geographically that every county in the U.S. has one or more outlets—in some cases, even dozens of outlets. Almost all own their facilities and attract millions of volunteers. If such an enterprise existed, it would be widely recognized as a success story of unmatched magnitude. Such an organization does exist. It is the story of American congregations, whose founding dates go back hundreds of years. Frequently, commentators focus on the size of each church rather than the large numbers of congregations engaged in ministry in local communities. If a congregation is small, is it also small in mission or significance? What are we worth?

How Location Does and Doesn't Matter

When a small congregation claims a small corner of creation as their own, their corner is the same size as any other church. In this way, all congregations are created equal—uniquely called to a particular spot on the globe. Further, worshipers and leaders believe that God founded their church or parish at a particular moment in history. Members reveal this belief in the stories they tell about the church's founding, in the biblical characters that members reference as inspiring, and in the hymns that members find most meaningful.

The more than 150-year history of one church illustrates how often members faced the question, "Is something significant happening here?" In 1849, nine members organized a church in the heart of their Southern city. Three years later, they purchased two lots downtown as a site for their sanctuary. During the Civil War, the church closed but later reopened with six members. After demolishing the old sanctuary and rebuilding in the same spot, the congregation worshipped in their new sanctuary for the first time in 1918

just as World War I ended. In 1955, after defeating a proposal to relocate, the congregation divided into two churches, one of which relocated to a different site. Another motion to relocate was defeated in 1980. Then in 2004, a motion to merge with another congregation (with the understanding that their church would close) failed. The congregation struggled until 2007 when they called a new full-time pastor. Over the next six years, various innovations and new strategies yielded a revitalized ministry in the *same place* established in 1849.¹

Why Do We Feel Insignificant?

Lewis Parks writes in *Small on Purpose* that to say "God" is to insist that there is more here than meets the eye in the small church. He says there is always "more" in our midst, but leaders spend too much time checking for symptoms rather than looking for strengths.² He cautions against simple solutions and encourages leaders to find ways to release energy and surrender "wish dreams."



Multiple disrupters cloud the perspective of small-church leaders, their members, and even denominational leaders. Here are several foes that hinder small churches from realizing their significance.

The focusing illusion. People assume that someone who becomes disabled will be unhappy. Yet people prove to be remarkably resilient when they focus on all the things they can still do or enjoy, in spite of their disability, rather than on the activities they can no longer do. Two economists first identified this mismatch between happiness and a real life condition or living experience.³ In a similar way, when a congregation focuses on one thing—often something they regard as a deficit—the members undervalue other aspects that play a role in their vitality. A one-factor focus exaggerates the importance of that one dynamic, which then incorrectly equates significance with that one factor.

As the church story above illustrates, the congregation repeatedly faced the focusing illusion—change the location and our ministry will be revitalized—and yet their continued successful ministry came because they repeatedly rejected the single-factor solution. Location is not the only single factor subject to the focusing illusion. Congregations overestimate the difference other single factors might make, such as finding the right pastor, starting a youth program, building new educational facilities, and more parking.

Distractions. Agitations large and small can cause irreversible harm. Small ones may go unnoticed and unevaluated, yet still direct us away from what is most significant in our church's ministry. Large ones lure the congregation away by their size, complexity, and demands for attention. Recording and reviewing distractions allows leaders to objectify, and thereby evaluate and possibly dismiss many noisy but unimportant demands. Therefore, in addition to marking which distractions are worth exploration, focus can also mean discerning what you are *not* going to do.

Inward focus vs. outward focus. Clergy turnover, budget constraints, building maintenance, aging members, and declining attendance are examples of issues that can easily swallow up all the attention of church leaders. Without due diligence, a focus on these internal matters will snuff out the light the congregation offers to the community. A congregation that is “out of balance” in terms of inward vs. outward focus begins to

feel less significant in the world. Members can feel like the church only exists for current members unless they stay focused on how they can make a difference in the community. When a church finds a genuine human need in the community and develops ways to address that need, it thrives.

Imagine a Blueprint for Significance

A blogger writes about reinventing the work experience and gives a “recipe for significance.”⁴ Church leaders can translate this advice into language that helps them better grasp the significance of their congregation's ministry.⁵ When people—or in this instance, congregations—operate in survival or security mode, they lose track of what matters most to them. Ask a leadership group to discuss the following questions:

- What do we really care about? What matters most to us as a congregation?
- Can we list ten of the most significant achievements of this congregation? Why do we believe these accomplishments are significant?
- Do we have the creativity to create the next chapter of our congregation's life?

Claiming Local Religious Creativity

The scale of small-membership churches grants opportunities for broad participation. The witness of persons in the pew includes prayers, presence, gifts, and service.⁶ Parks asserts that church is one of the few places where people regularly gather and sing. He concludes that worship is the most important thing a small church does. Other small-church gifts involve serving as the community's prayer voice, providing soul care, being a surrogate family, and a place of “time out.” In every community, people whose life story has been disrupted, seek God's presence, and search for a local place of worship.⁷

1. <http://1stpresalbany.org/who-we-are/our-history>.

2. Lewis A. Parks, *Small on Purpose: Life in a Significant Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 10.

3. Daniel Kahneman and David Schkade, <https://www.economix.com/whatis/the-focusing-illusion/>.

4. <https://powertochange.com/discover/world/significantwork/>

5. See also Church Effectiveness Nugget, 25 Turnaround Strategies for Small-Membership Congregations, <https://www.theparishpaper.com/sites/default/files/resources/Church%20Effectiveness%20Nuggets-%20Volume%2014%20.pdf>.

6. Parks, 38-39.

7. *Ibid.*, 60.