



The Beacon

August 2015

St. Christopher's
Community Church

7902 Steamboat
Island Road NW
Olympia, WA 98502
(360) 866-2111

Sunday Worship and
Sunday School
10:30 a.m.

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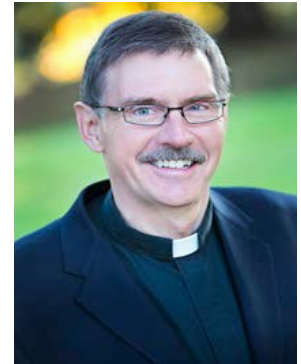
The Pain of Racism

By Bishop Richard E. Jaech

[from the Southwestern Washington Synod newsletter, July 2015]

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of you read the message I sent out last week in response to the tragic murder of nine Bible study class members in South Carolina (<http://bit.ly/1eko9MO>). I would like to offer some additional thoughts about the pain of racism in the United States and how we are all affected.



I lived my first twenty years in West Seattle and rarely met a person of color. In elementary and middle school, all my classmates were white. In high school, two African-American classmates transferred in from a central Seattle high school and arranged transportation to get themselves to school each day from across town. No African Americans, Latinos or Native Americans lived anywhere in West Seattle, except in a small, contained public housing project named High Point on the southern edge of West Seattle.

When I was about 15, I remember talking with two men from my home congregation, who were having a conversation about race relations during coffee hour one Sunday. I asked them why West Seattle was so white. One of them said, "That's no accident. Real Estate brokers never show a house in West Seattle to a black family." "But isn't that illegal?" I asked. "It's both illegal and immoral" he responded, "but nobody talks about it. It's just the way it is."

In many ways, it still is the way it is. Fair housing laws are stronger today and a bit more integration has taken place. Yet a recent city agency investigation in Seattle showed that people of color are still regularly denied housing in many neighborhoods. The agency sent both a white couple and an African American couple to various apartment complex offices in middle and upper middle class Seattle neighborhoods to ask about certain rental units that were advertised. In 67% of the inquiries, the African American couple were told that the units were either unavailable or cost significantly higher, while the white couple were told the same units were available at the lower, advertised price. (The investigation showed that this same discrimination took place against other ethnic couples and also gay/lesbian couples.)

Racism shows itself in one-on-one encounters that are demeaning or violent; it also shows itself in wide, systemic patterns of behavior that are woven into our society. Education, job hiring and law enforcement are all affected. A recent article on racial injustice in the July copy of *The Lutheran* reports that the median white family in the US has a net

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worth 13 times greater than the median African-American family. African-American teenagers are 21 times more likely to be killed by the police than white teenagers.

While genuine racial healing has happened in many relationships and communities, the recent tragic killings in Ferguson, New York and Charleston reveal that suspicion, hatred and tragic divisions are still among us. In the last week since the deaths in Charleston, at least two African American churches have been destroyed by arson.

What should we do? Through the searing pain of these events, the Holy Spirit is clearly stirring us to seek new understanding and healing with our African-American brothers and sisters. In order to move past the ways in which our lives are separated and divided, I believe that the first step for many of us, including myself, is to meet African-American sisters and brothers and learn from them. At our Synod Assembly in May we talked about the Three Great Listenings: listening to God, our congregation and our neighbors. One good step for us would be to seek out the African-American churches in each of our neighborhoods and get acquainted. That would be a start.

This week I have begun the process of meeting African-American pastors in Pierce County. I invite and encourage you to take one simple, but specific step in meeting your African-American neighbors as well. Let me know how it goes and what you discover along the way about your neighbor and about yourself. We can support each other during this time of learning. If you would like to be part of a Race Healing team, let me know about that also.

May God bless us and continue to fill us with the waters of healing and life. It is these holy waters that will enable us to walk farther than we can ever hope or imagine.

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Save the Dates for Synod Educational Gatherings



In lieu of a Synod Assembly in 2016, the Southwestern Washington Synod will be offering three regional Educational Gatherings. These events will offer several workshops for all interested synod members on topics ranging from Congregational Leadership to Congregational Mission workshops. A survey to help us plan, is now available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CYTL7VG>. The event dates to choose from are:

- Saturday, April 30, 2016- Synod Education and Worship Gathering at Trinity Lutheran, Vancouver 10am-5pm.
- Saturday, May 14, 2016- Synod Education and Worship Gathering at Gloria Dei Lutheran, Olympia 10am-5pm.
- Saturday, May 21, 2016- Synod Education

Blueberry Bash Silent Auction — Treasures, Time, & Talents

We are now accepting donations for the 2015 Blueberry Bash Silent Auction. The theme this year is Treasures, Time and Talents. Do you have a treasure just lying around that would make a good donation? Do you love to bake and could donate a “dessert a month for a year”? Do you draw or paint or make jewelry? Baskets around a theme such as movies or babysitting have been in great demand in years past. Use your imagination! Donations accepted until August 12th. Contact Cindy Goldsmith if you have any questions.

Blueberry Bash is Sunday, August 16.



Stewardship: St. Christopher's Financial Update

Regular Support:	July 2015—\$9,535.00 YTD 2015—\$78354.34
Total Giving:	July 2015—\$10,123.35 YTD 2015—\$106,340.35

America's Changing Religious Landscape



[from the Southwestern Washington Synod newsletter, July 2015]

The new Pew Research Center's report is out on America's changing religious landscape, with some stunning statistics. The pretty stunning statistic is the number of people who claim no religious affiliation. It has grown 6.7% in the seven years since the previous Pew report to a whopping 22.8% of the American population; in Washington State that amount have increased to 37%. Both mainline and Roman Catholic churches showed significant decline in numbers as well.

These changes are taking place across the religious landscape, affecting all regions of the country and many demographic groups. While the drop in Christian affiliation is particularly pronounced among young adults, it is occurring among Americans of all ages. The same trends are seen among

whites, blacks and Latinos; among both college graduates and adults with only a high school education; and among women as well as men. As the U.S. grows more racially and ethnically diverse, mainline Protestants remain one of the most heavily white Christian traditions.

The United States remains home to more Christians than any other country in the world, and a large majority of Americans – roughly seven-in-ten – continue to identify with some branch of the Christian faith. But the major new survey of more than 35,000 Americans by the Pew Research Center finds that the percentage of adults (ages 18 and older) who describe themselves as Christian has dropped by nearly eight percent in just seven years, from 78.4% in an equally massive Pew Research survey in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. In Washington State, the number of adults identifying themselves as Christian is only 61%. Of those, 13% are mainline Protestants, like the ELCA, Methodists and Episcopalians; while evangelical Protestants make up 25% and Catholics are at 17%, below the national average of 20.8%. People identifying as Jewish, Buddhist or Hindu account for 1% in Washington State.

Generational replacement appears to be playing a significant role. Mainline Protestant adults in the U.S. have a median age of 52, older than any other major religious tradition. While older generations die out, the young Americans rising into adulthood are significantly less likely to identify with mainline denominations. Among Millennial adults (born since 1981), 11% are mainline Protestants, 16% are Catholics, 21% are evangelical Protestants and 35% are religiously unaffiliated.

In the midst of all of the conversation about these numbers, there are many faithful leaders who remind us that God is active and alive and that the Spirit is moving even amid the rapidly changing structures of American life. The Pew Research report is online at http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/?mc_cid=ee1939ea02&mc_eid=5fc5857c64question.

August Sunday Service Volunteer Schedule

	Aug. 2	Aug. 9	Aug. 16 (BBB)	Aug. 23	Aug. 30
Greeter	Cindy Pitcher	Maggie Rydman & Sherry Christianson	Nancy Sachs		
Acolyte		Tyler Settle	Wheeler	Spencer Settle	Wheeler
Chalice Bearer	Cindy Goldsmith				
Reader		Alan Parker	Dixie Reimer	Cindy Pitcher	Sharon Parker
Coffee Hour	W&B Finn, Annette Edwards	Bonnie & Fred Finn	C&J Goldsmith, Kathy Haller	B&J Hanna, Cory Hilby	Danielle King, Audrey Kirsop
Altar Guild		Sherry Christianson & Bonnie Finn		Cindy Pitcher & Annette Edwards	Marilyn Walther
Altar Flowers	Kathy Haller & Darrell Haller				Andrew Family

Contact Volunteer Connections at stchristophervolunteers@gmail.com to help fill in the rest of this schedule!

If you are unable to provide service on the day scheduled, please make arrangements to find a replacement or trade places with someone. Thank you!



St. Christopher's Community Church
(Episcopal/ELCA)
7902 Steamboat Island Road NW
Olympia, WA 98502

St. Christopher's Community Church

Office Hours
Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thurs-
days, 2:30-5:30 p.m.— or by
appointment

360-866-2111
office@stchristopherolympia.org

Pastor & Priest
Fr. James Thibodeaux

Sunday Worship Hours
Worship and Sunday School at
10:30 a.m., with nursery care