



Moments for Mission

Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.
 December 2021

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Hope Is Both A Gift And A Choice

By Bishop Richard E Jaech, Synod Bishop



Dear Friends,

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

I have come to see that hope is both a gift and a choice. It is, first of all, a gift. Throughout the season of Advent, we begin our worship praying that God will come among us with power, grace and renewal. "Stir up your power and come."

In our world so full of tragedy, it would be impossible to produce hope by our own will power. Therefore, each week we ask God to come and bring us new life, just as God brought new life to Mary, Joseph and the people of Israel. And God comes! In a real flesh and blood way, God comes to fill us with new life each moment of the day. That is the source of our hope.

We feel so alone at times in this world. We feel so caught by the forces of violence, suspicion, and cruelty that keep washing over us. We wonder if anything can change for the better. Hope seems foolish.

Advent is opening ourselves to the arrival of a God who says, "I am with you. Your waiting is not in vain. I am right here with you, with your families, at your work place, out on the streets where everything is happening. I come to bring you new life."

Hope comes first of all as a gift to us, but, for hope to stay alive, we must also choose to exercise that gift and live as people of hope. Hope is like a muscle. It must be exercised to stay strong. Hope is like a musical instrument. It must be practiced or else the music will be lost.

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Hope, continued from page 1

Advent calls us, as God called Mary, to make a wild and crazy choice. If you are hoping for God's reign to arrive, then say "Yes!" to God and express in your own lives the things for which you hope. If you hope that God will bring peace to our troubled world, start working as a peace maker. If you hope that healing will come to the hearts and relationships of the people around you, practice the work of healing. If you hope for more justice in the world, be more just in your own transactions and advocate for public justice.

One of Martin Luther's main teachers was Meister Eckhart. In one of his books, Eckhart noted that the early Christian liturgies regularly called the Virgin Mary the *theotokos* – the God-bearer. Mary was the physical mother of God. Eckhart then said, "We are all meant to be mothers of **God**, for **God is always needing to be born.**"

May God be born in you during this time. May God awaken your hope. May we support one another and minister to those around us, so that together, as the whole people of God, we may give birth to God's life, joy, justice and hope in our world.

Bishop Rick Jaech

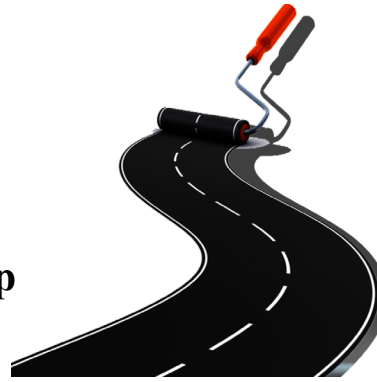
Congregations in Transition -December 2021

Lord, we pray for your wisdom, insight, and peace for these congregations the leaders in our synod who are working through a time of pastoral transition. We give you thanks for each and every one. Amen.

Congregations	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
Bethany, Longview	P	I	Pulpit Supply & Sr. Karen Norton
Calvary, Federal Way	P	NV	Pr. Alan Berg
Christ, Federal Way	P	C	Pulpit Supply
Gull Harbor, Olympia	P	NV	Pulpit Supply
Messiah, Auburn	AP	TR	Pr. Chuck Harris
Mountain View, Edgewood	P	I	Pr. Kim Latterell and Pr. Briana Merkle
Prince of Peace, Forks	P	TR	Pr. Mike Hanson
Spirit of Life, Pt Orchard	P	NV	Marietta Nelson-Bittle, SAM
St. John's, Lakewood	P	C	Pr. Dan Sorenson
Stella, Longview	P	NV	Pr. Lydia Brannon
Trinity, Parkland	P	NV	Pr. Jonette Blakney/Pr. Ron Kempe
Twin Harbors, Grayland	P	NV	Pulpit Supply
Zion, Camas	P	TR	Assoc Pr. Susan Dollinger

Mobility position key
P – Pastor
AP – Associate Pastor
D- Deacon

Mobility status key:
NV – New Vacancy
TR – Transition
I – Interviewing
C – Calling
SAM- Synod
Authorized Minister



On The Road with the Bishop

Sept. 27 – Oct. 1 ELCA Conference of Bishops meeting (Online). Shown are 49 of our 65 bishops



Oct. 10 Attended Agnus Dei Lutheran, Gig Harbor, new organ recital performed by Deacon Shari Shull, *shown below*

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On The Road, continued from page 3

Oct. 12 Toured Joint Base Lewis McCord led by Army and Air Force chaplains, together with the Synod staffs of both Southwestern and Northwest Washington Synods.



October 31 Preached at Peace Lutheran, Puyallup, where Pastor Nate Sutton serves.

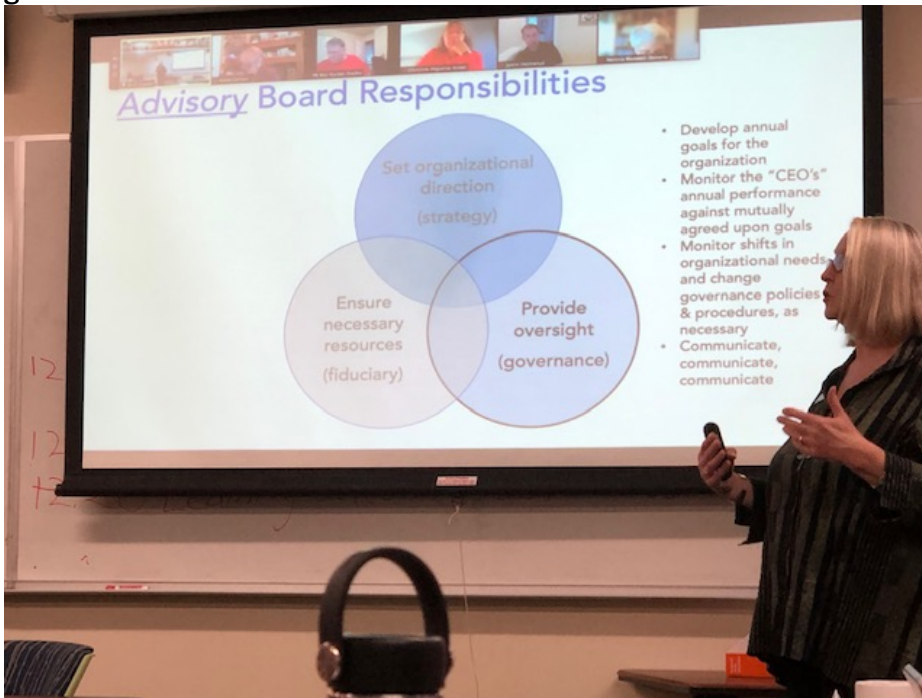


October 31 Attended an interfaith meeting of religious leaders in Pierce County to support the congregations, synagogues and mosques damaged by fires and vandalism. *Continued next page*

On The Road, continued from page 4



November 4-5 Attended an Advisory Board meeting at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, with Board members from Regions 1 and 2. Beth Lewis made a presentation as a guest consultant.



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On The Road, continued from page 5

November 7 Visited my former congregation, St. Mary and St. Martha Lutheran, a Latino congregation in San Francisco.



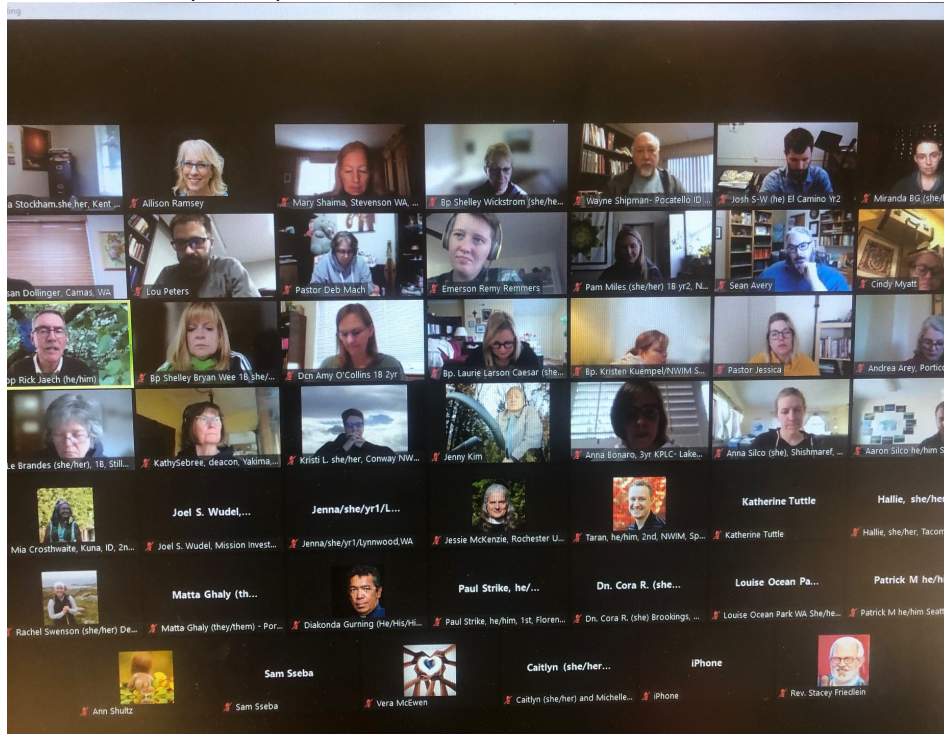
November 14 Preached and installed the Synod Board Members of ALYVE, who coordinate our Synod's high school ministry, at Creator Lutheran, Bonney Lake, served by Pastor Amanda Olson de Castillo. Shown in photo below are Bishop Jaech, *far right*, youth board members, and Advisor, Shannon Fleischfresser, *far left*.



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On The Road, continued from page 6

November 15-18 Helped plan, attended and presented at the First Call Theological Event, our Region 1 continuing education ministry to all rostered leaders who are in the first three years of their first call. (Online)



November 21 Preached at Trinity Lutheran, Parkland, served by Pastor Jonette Blakney and Interim Pastor Ron Kempe.



Tending God's Garden

Tending God's Garden video by Presiding Bishop, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vjxWnFnKFo&list=PLNDmVwhz-M34mAvgx5orNFsbAebN1MskR&index=3>

residing bishop's email address is bishop@elca.org. © ELCA. Reprinted with permission.



Resource for Youth- Called to Lead: A Galactic-themed Journey of Discovery

While watching galactic science fiction films, we might feel the urge to grab a laser sword and join the universal battle, fighting evil and standing for all that is good. These stories resonate strongly because they tap into our desire to rise above what we know and challenge us to become more than we think we can be. For young people who love science fiction and pop culture but struggle to talk about God and the Bible, the new, interactive

“Called to Lead” guide offers young people a starting place for discussion of their inner selves, their vocation and their call to lead.

The “Called to Lead” spiritual gifts interactive activity was first offered at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. Participants traveled to a distant galaxy where they identified their specific leadership gifts and abilities. Then they were sent to planets that offered them specialized training — so they could become the best protectors of the universe they could be!

Now “Called to Lead” has been adapted into a **set of downloadable resources that can be used in person or online**. The materials include a five-part Bible study guide as well as instructions and supplies for leading the spiritual gifts interactive activity in a variety of contexts. These resources were designed for middle school and high school youth, but they can be adapted for use with young adults. Our church needs leaders of all kinds as we look toward the future. The “Called to Lead” guide will give youth and young adults a new way to explore their baptism, spiritual gifts and call to lead.

Download it here: www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Vocation-Become-a-Leader

Mary's Magnificat Webinar

Magnificat *The ELCA Wittenberg Center invites you to a three-part webinar series to mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's commentary on the Magnificat and the continued significance of Mary's voice. Each hour-long session will take place at 12 pm Central time.*

My Soul Magnifies the Lord:

The Gift of Mary's Voice

Brought Down the Mighty From Their Thrones:

The Strength of Mary's Voice

From Generation to Generation: Future of Mary's Voice

DECEMBER

Register at bit.ly/MagnificatWebinar

PLU Financial Aid Facts

Did you know that 98% of PLU students receive financial aid? The average financial aid offer in 2020-2021 was \$37,197 (from all sources, including scholarships, grants, work study, and student loans).

To learn more about PLU admissions and financial aid, go to <http://www.plu.edu/admission-first-year/financial-aid/>

ELCA Youth Gathering Questions Answered

Deacon Ingelaurie Lisher, from St Mark's Lutheran Church by the Narrows in Tacoma, is serving as the Synod Gathering Coordinator for the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis July 24-28 and it is not too late to register!

Check out this list of 10 things to know as you prepare for the Gathering.

<https://blogs.elca.org/youthgathering/10-things-to-know/?fbclid=IwAROVfLpvx8Q96whJrFKJP4UPGXHTbXji2sdGE1VIIAw1Vqdo2bk5IjSIwqo>

Registration Materials, FAQ and more info, at <https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering>

If you have questions or are looking for ways to connect your group with another church from our synod who is attending, please feel free to contact Ingelaurie at ingelaurie@smlutheran.org. She is ready to answer any questions you have about the Gathering from registration, housing, fundraising, how to pick your adult leaders and more. See more in the following pages...

Greetings from the ELCA Youth Gathering!



Every three years, thousands of high school youth and their adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

We know that this ministry changes lives and enriches congregational youth ministry, and we hope your congregation will **join us at the 2022 Gathering, from July 24 to 28 in Minneapolis, Minn.** We've heard time and again that the Gathering "belongs on the timeline of your faith journey."

It's not too late to get things started

Many congregations are just now getting ready to attend the 2022 Gathering, so you aren't behind! We've put together a [list of 10 things](#) you should know as you prepare to get your group together. When you're ready to register your group, you'll need to head over to the Gathering's website and enter your five-digit congregation ID. If you don't know it, contact your synod office or email the Gathering's office (gathering@elca.org).

Once you're in, you'll be able to start registering your participants and filling out the congregational details section. Register and pay the \$150 deposit for each participant before Nov. 21 to stay within the early-bird rate of \$350 per person. Starting on Nov. 22, registration costs rise to \$390 per person.

Things to look forward to:

- **Jan. 21, 2022:** Regular registration ends
- **Jan. 22, 2022:** Servant Companion applications close
- **Jan. 22, 2022:** Housing assignments released (for Early Bird registrants)
- **Feb. 10 – 14, 2022:** [2022 ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza \(Minneapolis, Minn.\)](#)

Servant Companion applications are now OPEN!



Young adults (19-30 at the time of the Gathering) are now encouraged to apply to serve as a Servant Companion for the ELCA's 2022 Youth Gathering! Servant Companions will accompany congregational groups as they encounter and serve the people of Minneapolis during their Service Learning day. Applicants should be comfortable leading a group, thinking on their feet and speaking about their faith. Applications are open until Jan. 22, 2022.

[Learn More or Apply](#)

Living Stones Prison Congregation making free backpacks

Does your congregation, agency, or ministry have a need for FREE backpacks? Living Stones Prison Congregation is working with the quilters of the Washington Corrections Center to produce and distribute backpacks made onsite using sturdy canvas material (repurposed from the belongings bags every arriving inmate brings with them to Shelton). These backpacks include a larger main pocket (with latched closure), smaller exterior ones (e.g. for water bottles), and adjustable shoulder straps. If your ministry could make use of this resource, please reach out to sandi@livingstonespc.org with the desired quantity and we will work with the prison to distribute backpacks as available.

Wishing you Hope for a blessed Advent and Christmas season



From, Your Synod Staff: Bishop Rick Jaech, Pastor Rebecca Shjerven, Joey Ager and Allison Kies

A Drum Roll Please!

By Sandi Nolte, Ministry Assistant, Living Stones Prison Congregation

It is our joy to announce the winners of our Fall 2021 raffle!

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee from the Northwest Washington Synod and Bishop Rick Jaech from the Southwestern Washington Synod drew the winning tickets at the Southwestern Washington Synod Office on November 23rd. Living Stones Board members joined the festive time in-person and others participated in our livestream event on our Facebook page. (You can still watch the drawing

at: <https://www.facebook.com/LivingStonesPrisonCongregation>.) Both bishops called the winners and told them of the prize they won during the live broadcast.

Grand prize (\$2,021) - Dorothy Wyatt, *Centralia, WA*

2nd prize (\$221) - Susan Kavanaugh, *Olympia, WA*

3rd prize (handmade tote bag) - Annette Andrews-Lux, *Clinton, WA*

4th prize (handmade Christmas apron) - Karen Dicken, *Stanwood, WA*

5th prize (handmade St. Patrick quilt) - Fir-Conway Lutheran Church, *Mount Vernon, WA*

6th prize (handmade Easter quilt) - Jacob Nolte, *Shoreline, WA*

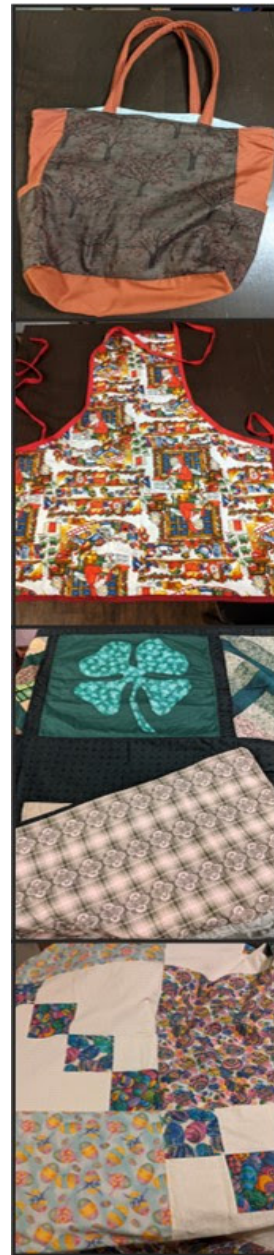
Note: the non-cash prizes shown right were all created by the men of Living Stones.

Our deep and heartfelt **thank you** to all who participated. This year congregations from both the Northwest Washington Synod and the Southwestern Washington Synod took part in the Living Stones fundraiser. As some congregations continued to be remote and others moved to in-person worship and activities, the congregations found creative ways to conduct the raffle. The initial (unofficial) accounting shows that over \$11,000 was raised! Funds go to the Living Stones Prison Congregation's general budget, which provides the spiritual care for our men at both the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton and the Monroe Correctional Complex in Monroe, and also the support of Pastor Chris Ode, Living Stone's Pastor and Sandi Nolte, the Living Stones Ministry Assistant.

We are grateful for your support and give thanks to God for your continued commitment to caring for our men. Our brothers behind the walls, the Living Stones board members, and our staff thank you for your partnership with us in this ministry.

You are part of God's activity of love and grace in this community. *You are making a difference in the lives of our men!*

Thanks be to God!



Peace, Tacoma puts Anti-Racism as their Foundational Commitment

Peace Lutheran Church, which started in 1909, is an urban congregation in the middle of the Hilltop area of Tacoma. For the first 50 years of their existence, they preserved its members' German culture and language. Then beginning in the 1970's, as the Hilltop was wrought with drug-related gang activity, most notably related to the infamous Hilltop Crips, Pastor Holle Plaehn was called and began doing outreach and engaging their diverse community even more. Pastor Plaehn led this church for 30 years throughout the height of gang troubles.

The Hilltop neighborhood has been a diverse neighborhood in Tacoma for generations. The neighborhood has been a target of redlining, a racist practice in which Communities of Color are denied financial services, health services, and other essentials. This history of redlining has led to serious, long-term impacts on the neighborhood and its residents. Nestled close to downtown, the once underinvested neighborhood is now experiencing rapid redevelopment—but often in isolation from the community itself. The Hilltop neighborhood is being gentrified, has numerous cases of police brutality and renewed calls for racial justice, and the church feels called to act in a deeper and more integrated way.

Peace Lutheran Church has a vision statement that Pastor John Stroeh, who has been serving at Peace since 2007, says at the beginning of every Sunday worship service, following the Coast Salish Nation land acknowledgement statement, “We believe God’s vision for Peace is to be a diverse community of faith in the Hilltop where all are welcome - a community that is Spirit-filled, compassionate, healthy, reconciled, and just.” He always says that they are living into that vision. In the past 18 months, a diverse team of members of Peace have worked to figure out how this church really can live into being one that is all of those things in their ‘future directions’.

This Future Directions team first researched their church history and the history and impact of racism in their community to help understand it. Then they looked at a theological grounding for their work: we are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), Jesus breaks down all dividing walls (Ephesians 2:14), the whole church looks forward to God’s future when people will be gathered from all cultures and peoples in the reign of God (Revelation 7). Peace names racism (individual and systemic) as a sin and is called to join God in bringing about justice for the oppressed and transformation of all society (Luke 4).

Their Foundational Commitment is to understand, address, and dismantle racism inside themselves, their community, and congregation as a fundamental way in which they live out their Christian faith and seek to love their neighbors. This commitment will be integrated into all that they say and do as people following Jesus in their community and context, and in their decision-making processes.

They’ve developed this “Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism” in four areas:

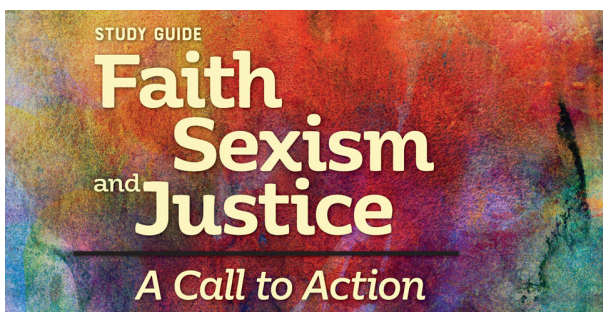
1. “Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism”- working to implement this commitment of anti-racism into all ministries and members within the church and Peace Community Center, which the church helped to start in 2000.

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Peace, continued from page 13

2. “Ministry of Place” to support long-time Hilltop residents and residents who have been displaced, engaging with Peace Community Center, prioritizing affordable housing.
3. “Catechism of Peace” to integrate their commitment to anti-racism and cross-cultural communication into teaching, training and equipping church leadership, participants and the larger community to greater individual and corporate learning and growth.
4. “Priesthood of All Believers”- Through the lens of their foundational commitment to anti-racism, equip all people in the church to discern and use their gifts to serve God in the community.

This commitment of the congregation as a whole and of individual members of the worshipping community is a faith journey of learning, accountability, and grace.



Helpful Study Guide on Gender Justice
Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

I am excited to announce that the ELCA churchwide organization is releasing the study guide for this church’s newest social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. The new study guide features six flexible sessions that can be customized for in-person gatherings, virtual discussions or interactive virtual meetings. Each session incorporates prayers, videos, engaging activities, Scripture study and invitations to live out the social statement’s call to gender justice in the world.

The study guide supports individuals, congregations, students, organizations and faith leaders as they explore gender justice to pursue equity for women and girls. “Because we rely on God as a God of promise, this church speaks about sexism and the harm it causes for all people,” reads the statement’s introduction. “Those who support gender justice are intent on righting gender-based wrongs that prevent the abundant and flourishing life God intends” (*Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, p. 14).

As Lutherans, we are called to serve the neighbor and affirm the diversity of God’s creation. Grounded in faith and love, we work for a gender justice that flows from the heart of Lutheran theology and cultivates abundant life for all people. <https://elca.org/FSJstudyguide>

Congregation News

Faith Lutheran Church, Elma celebrated their 61st anniversary last month.

All of our synod congregations will be having a Christmas Eve worship service. Some of them will also have a **Blue Christmas/Longest Day and/or Christmas Day worship service**, too. You can find this list on the synod website at: <https://swwasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Alternate-Christmas-services-2021-in-SWWA-Synod.pdf>

St. Andrew Lutheran and St. Paul Lutheran in Vancouver WA started serving their 19th season of Winter Hospitality Overflow (WHO). The WHO is a winter overflow shelter providing additional capacity for folks in Vancouver who are currently experiencing homelessness and need to get in from the outside on any given night during the coldest and wettest months, from November 1 to March 31. This ecumenical ministry provides up to 80 of their most vulnerable neighbors with a safe, warm and predictable place to rest. Each night St Paul Lutheran Church serves 25-30 single men, and St. Andrew Lutheran Church serves 45-50 single women and families.

Current Congregation Job Openings

Click on job titles for online links to job information or go to the synod website <https://swwasynod.org/congregational-resources/job-opportunities/>

Updated 11/24/21

Worship Coordinator, St. Lukes Lutheran Church, Spokane

Ministry Associate for First Third of Life, Messiah Lutheran, Vancouver WA

Office Administrator, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Bremerton

Digital Media Coordinator, Zion Lutheran Church,

Organist/Musician, Christ Lutheran Church, Lakewood

Church Musician, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Vancouver WA

Piano Accompanist, First Lutheran Community Church, Port Orchard

Audio Technician (PT), Silverdale Lutheran, Silverdale

Director of Faith Formation In the First Third of Life, Beautiful Savior, Vancouver WA

Technology Support (Information and Communications), Beautiful Savior, Vancouver WA

Children's Ministry Coordinator (PT), The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd, Olympia

Nursery Attendant (hourly), The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd, Olympia

Children and Family Ministry Coordinator, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood

Church Administrator, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Edgewood

Minister of Music and Worship, Celebration Lutheran Church, Puyallup //