



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.

August 2020

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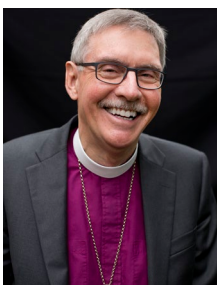
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Stirring up “Good Trouble”

by Bishop Richard Jaech, Synod Bishop



Congressman John Lewis, who died this past week, lived out his faith and served his country by making “good trouble”. When something was happening that was terribly unjust...for example, when African American people were not permitted to eat at “whites only” restaurants or when people of color were not allowed to vote...Lewis bravely confronted and “troubled” those who were acting unfairly, so that they would start doing what was right. He stirred up “good trouble” for a good and necessary outcome.

The reformer, Martin Luther, did that as well (which is why a friend of John Lewis was named, Martin Luther King, Jr.) In the 1500’s, when the reformer Luther saw church leaders selling early release tickets out of purgatory, called indulgences, and saw the church focusing more on accumulating wealth than proclaiming the love of God, Luther “troubled” the church leaders with his public speeches and writings, wanting them to change. For those of us who are thankful that the Reformation took place, that was “good trouble.”

Jesus also practiced “good trouble.” Along with his constant compassion and healing for suffering people, Jesus challenged, confronted and disobeyed local leaders when they blocked God’s love and caused people to suffer. He turned over the tables of the money changers in Jerusalem, he repeatedly upset the Pharisees by welcoming social outcasts into his community, and he even troubled his mother into expanding her sense of who her “family” was.

John Lewis was committed to God’s vision of dignity, freedom and justice for all, and he knew that in order to change imbedded, unfair laws, you often needed to protest injustice with your actions, as well as your words.

However...and this is a vital part of Lewis’ faith-practice...John Lewis never resorted to violence as a tactic. Rather, following the example of Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis practiced civil disobedience and non-violent resistance when he challenged an unjust law or social practice.

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A Passage, continued from page 1

Jesus, also, never resorted to violence against people when he opposed sinful and unjust systems. "Those who live by the sword will die by the sword," he said. Tragically, Martin Luther did resort to violence when he encouraged the rulers in Germany to kill the poor farmers who were revolting against abuse. Even more terribly, Luther told the German authorities to imprison Jewish people, deny them work, take away their property, and even kill them, simply for being Jewish. Four hundred years later, the German Nazis used Luther's writings to justify the murder of six million Jewish people. These are actions of Luther for which we modern day Lutherans repent.

I am writing about John Lewis not only to honor a great model of faith, but also to help myself sort through my own feelings about both protest and the violence done by some protestors on the city streets of America.

I completely support the right and necessity of public protest, which is one of our constitutional rights as American citizens and also part of our Christian calling. Silence or apathy is not an option when people are being mistreated. In our nation, black, brown, and indigenous people routinely experience cruelty, violence, and disrespect. If the governing authorities will not correct that, then all citizens should band together and make some "good trouble" until they do.

However, I completely oppose the violence and destruction that some protestors are doing. At the same time that 97% of the protestors are expressing themselves in a passionate, but peaceful manner, 3% (or less) are setting fires, breaking windows, and attacking other people. This is both morally wrong and bad strategy. I understand the hurt and rage that lies behind violent protest. Violence, however, starts a downward cycle, as we have seen with the arrival of masked, unidentified federal agents who have further escalated the violence in a counter-productive way.

The errors of the few should not keep us from following our calling as citizens and disciples of Jesus. God calls us with the vision of a community where everyone receives full life in body, mind, and spirit. God wants for us a world where all people and creation itself enjoys the peace that passes understanding. With our words and actions, we join with Jesus in building that world. And, when we get stuck in some unhealthy social patterns and unjust practices, we do everything we can, including stirring up some "good trouble," to set things right in a non-violent way.

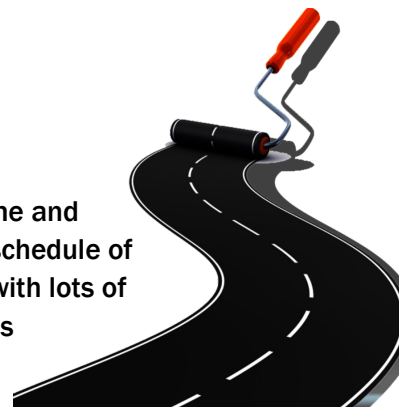
May God bless us and guide us as we walk this challenging path together.

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech

On the Cyberspace Road with the Bishop

With the rest of the Synod Staff, I am working out of my home and limiting my road trips. However, my work schedule and the schedule of all the Synod Staff members has been very full each week, with lots of Zoom visits and meetings. Here is a sampling of my activities around the Synod in June:



- July 1 Met with all six bishops of ELCA Region 1
- July 2 Met with all 65 bishops of the ELCA
- July 6 Met with Synod Council Executive Committee
- July 15 Met with pastors and deacons of the South Sound and Coastal Confs.
- July 16 Met with Synod Attorney, Jim Hushagen
- July 28 Participated in a webcast with PLU University Pastor Jen Rude
- July 28 Hosted a discussion with Synod Church Musicians

Congregations in Transition - August 2020

Lord, we pray for your wisdom, insight, and peace for these congregations the 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
Bethel, Brush Prairie	P	TR	Vera McEwan SAM
Christ, Federal Way	P	TR	Pr. Mark Peterson
Grace, Port Townsend	P	TR	Pr. Alan Berg
Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma	P	TR	Pr. Linda Milks
Mountain View, Edgewood	P	TR	Pr Mike Greenwalt, Pr Kim Latterell
Vinland, Poulsbo	P	I	Pr. Mike Hanson
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- Synodically Authorized Minister

God's beautiful dark works

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



Perhaps one of the best-known verses in the New Testament is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” It comes toward the end of a deep conversation between Nicodemus, a leader of his people, and Jesus. Much has been made about the detail that Nicodemus sought out Jesus at night. Was he afraid to be seen? Was this a stealthy move under the cover of darkness?

This encounter isn't usually regarded as Nicodemus' finest hour. The mention of night casts a shadow (pun intended) on this holy meeting.

Darkness and blackness and night are too often contrasted with lightness and whiteness and day, and found deficient. But I want to consider the beautiful dark works of God.

“In the beginning ... darkness covered the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:1-2). Creation began in the dark. The mysterious outpouring of God's love that brought all things into being, and continues creating and sustaining the universe and all that is in it, was the beautiful dark work of God.

When Abram began to doubt God's faithfulness, the Lord took him on a walk and, pointing to the midnight sky, said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. ... So shall your descendants be” (Genesis 15:5). Jacob wrestled all night with God and was irrevocably changed. Samuel heard a voice calling to him in the dark and became a mighty prophet. At midnight, the Lord passed over Egypt and set the people free.

The Messiah's birth was announced by angels to shepherds in the dark. Jesus' Passion began and his Holy Supper was given “on the night in which he was betrayed.” When he was crucified, it was dark from noon to 3. The redemption of all creation was a beautiful dark work of God.

Presiding Bishop Emeritus H. George Anderson was asked to comment on the Crystal Cathedral (now Christ Cathedral)—the glass structure filled with light. He observed that light didn't allow spaces for dark where one could sense the mystery of God. King Solomon understood that when, at the dedication of the temple, he declared, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness” (1 King 8:12). The glory of God is shielded and revealed in darkness. It is incomprehensible and irresistible.

Back to Nicodemus. Maybe he was experiencing his own “dark night of the soul” when he came looking for Jesus. This expression has come to stand for doubt and angst and emptiness. That's not how St. John of the Cross meant it. He understood it to be the beginning of his journey toward union with God, toward communion with Love. I think Nicodemus was looking for the same thing, and he found it. It was in this middle-of-the-night, heart-of-darkness promise that Jesus revealed to Nicodemus the intention God had for the world God so loved. *Continued next page*

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Darkness isn't a symbol of emptiness, or godforsakenness. It's not synonymous with everything that is dry and barren and lifeless. Nine chapters later in the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (12:24). I think of the rich, black soil of my native Ohio. Each spring it brings abundant life. Single grains become many; individuals become community. As Sister Joan Chittister wrote: "Darkness deserves gratitude. It is the alleluia point at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in the sunlight."

By tradition, the Resurrection is heralded at night during the Easter Vigil. In this beautiful liturgy people gather in the darkness and hear the ancient words: "This is the night when once you led our forebears, Israel's children, from slavery in Egypt. This is the night when Christ broke the prison bars of death."

The liberation of God's people, Israel, and the redemption of all creation are the beautiful dark works of God.

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her email address is: bishop@elca.org This column originally appeared in Living Lutheran's August 2020 issue. Reprinted with permission.

Remote Congregational Meeting Guidelines

Using the Washington RCWs and legal information, this document provides all of our congregations the most up to date information on holding and voting at all virtual congregational meetings. This information succeeds Governor Inslee's protocol

<https://lutheranssw.org/wp-content/uploads/Remote-Congregational-Meetings-8-20.pdf>



*As Synod leadership we would like to amplify the variety of voices across the Southwestern Washington Synod, so we've started this monthly feature, **Synod Voices**. As a Church, we are facing challenging situations and finding creative, Spirit-led solutions to work for justice across the street and around the world. We choose to advocate for people of all identities and listen to diverse voices. Understanding who we are as a Synod helps us honor human dignity and create an authentically inclusive church.*



Name: Dawna Svaren

My Home Church/City is:
Ocean Park Lutheran Church, Ocean Park WA

My job/position is: Pastor (newly retired)

I understand my identity as:
Filipino / Mexican / Santa Clara Pueblo / Spanish ;
she/her

I am a Lutheran because:
The short answer is because I married a Lutheran. The longer answer is that I found "home" in the deep sense of God I experienced through worship, the encouragement of theological questioning, the welcome of diversity and the challenge to live into our faith using a mixture of skills, talents, passion and capabilities.

My story is:

You might say that a chance summer at Christikon Lutheran Bible Camp in the beautiful Beartooth Mountains of Montana, along the Boulder River, as the director of their Special Education Camp session changed my life in more ways than one. During those few summer months, I met the man who would become my husband, grew to love the

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Lutheran outdoor camp program (I had never attended outdoor camp growing up), made lifelong friends, learned my first "Lutheran" hymns - Lift High the Cross and

Have No Fear Little Flock, and realized that in this faith community, women could become pastors. That small spark of realization, simmered just below the surface of my own life, and 20 years after I first walked onto the grounds of Christikon I stood among my family, mentors, congregation and a host of friends who gathered around me as I was ordained as a pastor in the ELCA. Who would have known that as one who had grown up in the Roman Catholic faith community, and who had felt a calling into ministry, would one day see God's vision for my life fulfilled in such a remarkable way. 41 years later almost to the day from that Christikon summer, I am now retiring and beginning a new journey. I'm looking forward to living into God's vision for the next years of my life. Not sure what that will be. But waiting with anticipation, none the less.

Something people don't usually know about me is:

I have never actually compiled a "bucket list". So when I was given the opportunity to preach and preside while we lived and worked in Beijing, China (2011-2015), it would have been high on such a list. I have to admit the 18 months of being an unofficial interim (with the blessing of my bishop) for an ecumenical liturgical congregation of expats who was going through a time of transition remains a significant time which changed and challenged my understanding of evangelism, ministry and community.

To me, GRACE means:

Perhaps I might explain GRACE through the words of my grandson, Maddox. When we are building Lego creations together, he reminds me that instructions are important. One time I made a (significant) mistake putting together a portion of his Lego hovercraft. I made the comment that I had done it all wrong. His response? "That's okay Grandma Dawna, we all make mistakes. Here, let me help you." To me, there is no greater reflection of God's grace than in those words I heard uttered from the mouth of a 5 year old.

I share my faith by:

I share my faith quietly. After 21 years of ministry, most of that working with youth and families I have come to learn from those kids, now adults, that it was the one-on-one conversations; the notes of encouragement; the willingness to drive hours to a sports event to cheer them on; the opportunity for prayer and service to others; the questions I dared to pose about God and the times they dared raise questions about religion, faith, God and life which would make the most significant life long impact on their own faith journeys. I share my faith through the gift of song. Sometimes the best words and ways I can share the depth of my faith is through song - either of my own composition, or another's lyrics/melody. I use song when I preach. I use song when I teach. I use song

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when I pray. All my life, music and song have been an integral way of expressing myself. Song has a way of moving both intellect and emotion - soul and body. Faith and song are so intertwined in my life. Sometimes I can't tell where one ends and the other begins.

My favorite symbol of my faith is:

Water. I love to remind people of their baptism and will take every opportunity to include the rite of Asperges into the liturgy. Undoubtedly, a small amount of water is all we need to make the mark of our baptism on our forehead. But when I can be extravagant with the amount of water I use, I always take that opportunity, as it becomes both a tactile and spiritual reminder of God's welcome, God's gift of love and the promise of God's faithfulness in our lives.

I pray for:

so much! For the past three years, 7:14 am has become a time of dedicated prayer for the whole congregation of Ocean Park Lutheran Church (OPLC). Rooted in 2 Chronicles 7.14, 'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray...' I invited every member to set aside a moment or two or more, to pray for God's vision for this faith community. Sometimes we pray for very specific petitions. Other times we simply lift up one another. It became a cherished time of my day and others have found this spiritual discipline to become a stepping stone into a deeper time of prayer for their own lives. As you enter into the church building, you will pass by two substantial permanent chalk boards. One encourages people to write down something they want to do before they die. The other is highlighted, "I want someone to pray..." People in our own church community as well as our neighborhood have been invited to come to the church and write down their prayer petitions - and they have heeded our invitation. The chalkboard is nearly full - pray for my mom; pray for our country; pray for healing; pray for... This chalkboard has become a holy ground of ministry, prayer and hope.

Affordable Housing Update

The synod's Affordable Housing Task Force, which includes a lay and clergy from across the synod, has worked define its role. Here is the working draft of our purpose:

Empowering and Partnering with congregations by
Providing affordable housing whose residents are
Thriving in connection with local ministries.

The need for affordable housing was ever-present in numerous communities throughout our synod prior to the coronavirus pandemic. When I speak with congregations about the greatest need in their community, the need for affordable housing is named time and time again. The economic impacts of sheltering in place will likely cause this need to be more
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urgent. The challenge of finding a housing that can be purchased or rented affordably has at times prevented rostered leaders from taking calls to our synod. The identification of affordable housing as a synod priority is timely

Several members of the task force have been and continue to contact congregations to identify property that may be available for affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Task will look for partner congregations that have both a desire to build relationships with residents of the Affordable Housing. Here are a few questions that have been raised as we have engaged in conversation:

“What is affordable housing?” is a question that has been raised. While there are several definitions to consider, the task force considers their work and purpose to further affordable housing for: “households earning a maximum of 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) for the county, in which case an affordable rent is 30% of household income.”

What will be the model of affordable housing? The preferred model of the Affordable Housing Task Force is one in which the congregation maintains ownership of land, leasing land to synod non-profit for development of affordable housing. In this model, building management will also be with outside management partner. The task force recognizes that there are several models for congregations to support the development of affordable housing. Congregations will make decisions regarding what is the best model their congregation and context.

Program for Active Lay Ministry Registration Closes Aug 15th

The Southwestern Washington Synod seeks to form and support trustworthy, inclusive lay leaders who are grounded in Christian faith and in a Lutheran expression of faith. The Program for Strengthening Active Lay Ministry (PSALM) is designed for congregation members who have discerned a call to more intentional and public lay leadership in their congregation and community.

PSALM is a two-year program that takes place over four terms. Each of the 4 terms is approximately 6 months long and begins with an overnight retreat. The coursework for the term is introduced at the retreat by a variety of presenters who bring expertise to the topics. In addition to course assignments each term, students will work on practical ministry projects in their congregation or ministry setting. They will have an opportunity to share these projects with each other as part of the retreats.

Questions? Contact us at psalm@plu.edu PSALM application materials can be found on the Synod website at <https://lutheranssw.org/leader-resources/psalm>

Congregational Technology Grants

We have received so many technology upgrade grants last month and we see that this is a priority for our congregations, and thus, our synod. We are working on increasing the funding for these grants. Currently, the Tech Upgrade Grant Evaluation Team is reviewing the grants, having conversations with our congregations about their plans and the grants should be out in mid–August

The CARES Act affects Charitable Giving

The CARES Act, designed to help the nation recover from the pandemic, has five important implications for charitable giving:

1. **New Charitable Deduction for Non-itemizers:** Taxpayers who take the standard deduction can nevertheless claim a charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations in 2020.
2. **Higher Deduction Limits:** Individuals will be able to deduct cash gifts in 2020 to the extent of their entire adjusted gross income rather than a cap at 60%.
3. **Increased Deduction Limits for Corporations:** The contribution limit for corporations has been raised to 25% for cash contributions this year.
4. **Required Minimum Distributions Waived:** The Fhe year 2020, there will be no mandatory distributions from retirement accounts, thus allowing those accounts to recover. Once they do recover, retirement funds are a tax-wise giving strategy.
5. **Waiver of Penalties When Retirement Funds are Used for Coronavirus Purposes:** If you are under the age of 59-1/2 and withdraw money from your retirement plan to cover expenses incurred by you or a family member related to treatment of the coronavirus, the 10% tax penalty will not apply. In the future you may consider a retirement fund gift.
6. **Under the CARES Act, employers may contribute up to \$5,200 annually toward payment of an employee's qualified student loans, and such payment is excluded from the employee's income. The \$5.250 limit also factors in existing payments towards other education costs. This exclusion applies to student loan payments made by an employer (whether paid to the employee or a lender) on behalf of an employee between March 27, 2020 and January 1, 2021.**

The information contained herein is offered for general informational and educational purposes. You should seek the advice of an attorney or financial advisor for applicability to your own situation.

Congregation News

Saron Lutheran/First Presbyterian Church in Hoquiam announces that their Associate Pastor Jeani Shofner died in her sleep of cancer last week at Grays Harbor Community Hospital. Jeani's husband Ed is currently in another hospital.

Pastor Michelle de Beauchamp of Saron Lutheran was able to pray over her and read to her from the Bible before she died. Please keep Pastor Shofner's family and the family of Saron Lutheran/First Presbyterian Church in your prayers. Plans for a memorial service will be scheduled at a future date when all the family can gather together again.

News from **ELCA YAGM** coordinator for Central Europe, Pastor Rachel Eskesen and her husband, Pastor Zach Courter. Pastor Rachel is rostered in our Synod.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/exfnk9lla2j6ygz/Summer%202020%20Newsletter.pdf?dl=0>

Holy Trinity, Port Angeles has begun a Racial Justice Reading Marathon. They are reading, "Stamped from the Beginning" by Ibram X. Kendi. This historical overview of racist ideas in America will provide them with the knowledge they need to discern how to move forward. The book consists of 5 larger sections. They will read one section per month from July to November. Once a month, they meet to discuss the chapters in that month's section.

Free Piano available

A retired HS teacher in our area has a family member with a piano to give away/donate. If a charitable organization wants it, the moving cost in the area would be included. If an individual would like it, they can have it free, but must cover the moving. Here is a description:

The piano is a '94-'96 Kranich & Bach. 41" upright. I do not know of last tuning date (if any). It appears in very good condition - a few small, not deep, scratches on top.

interested parties can contact me and I can share. gronie@comcast.net



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