



## Staff

**Bishop Richard E. Jaech**

**Rev. Rebecca Shjerven**  
bishop's associate

**Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger**  
director for evangelical mission  
(ELCA staff)

**Allison Ramsey**  
office manager

Phone  
(253) 535-8300

Address  
420 121<sup>st</sup> St. S  
Tacoma, WA 98444

E-mail  
[swwsynod@plu.edu](mailto:swwsynod@plu.edu)

Blog  
<http://swwsynodelca.blogspot.com>

Websites  
[www.lutheranssw.org](http://www.lutheranssw.org)  
[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

**Facebook page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-western-Washington-Synod/1290477871337786>

**Twitter**  
@SWWASynod

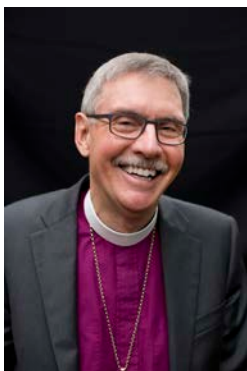
# Moments for Mission

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.*  
March 2020

## Mindful of the Coronavirus

by Bishop Richard Jaech, Synod Bishop

*This article was sent out on March 1<sup>st</sup> to all of our congregations and rostered ministers. It's repeated here due to the importance of this topic.*



Dear Friends in Christ,

### How do we care for each other as we are mindful of the coronavirus?

It is wise and appropriate to be concerned about the spreading of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and to take reasonable precautions as we gather at our churches for worship and meetings. The healing ministry that Jesus

modeled for us certainly includes basic care for one another as well as care for ourselves. I offer to you below a summary of good recommendations that come from public health spokespeople and religious leaders.

### First, what should we do each day wherever we are – at church, at home, and at work.

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. All the time. All day long.
2. At all times, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth – the places germs enter the body.
3. When you cough, cough into your bent elbow, not into your hand. If you have to blow your nose, dispose of the tissue as soon as possible in a waste container with a lid that closes and then either wash your hands immediately or use an alcohol-based liquid (at least 60% alcohol) to sanitize your hands.
4. Keep a respectful distance from people when you are talking to them. We don't have to be in each other's faces to talk. This is particularly important if someone is coughing or sneezing.
5. Whenever possible, use Zoom, GoToMeeting, or Skype for meetings.
6. If you're sick, stay home! Encourage others to stay home if they are sick.

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

*Coronavirus, continued from page 1*

**Should we attend worship services at church?** Yes, as long as you are not sneezing, coughing, or running a fever, in which case you should stay and home and take care of yourself, contacting your doctor if symptoms persist. Gathering for worship, singing, receiving the Eucharist, and being with friends all supports your wellness. However, when you are at church, you should follow these practices that reduce the spread of germs and help people to feel safer.

1. Have a discussion as a congregation about different ways to Share the Peace. For example, instead of shaking hands you can:

- Tap elbows or forearms with each other as you Share the Peace.
- Place your hands at your heart in a prayer position or cross your hands over your heart and bow towards one another. (This has been the practice for some time at Lutheran churches in Asia)
- Wave to the other person as you say, “God’s peace be with you.”
- Once again, open discussion and idea-sharing about this would be useful. Otherwise, some people will worry that they will seem “unfriendly” if they don’t shake hands, while others will stop coming to church.

2. Everyone distributing bread and wine at Holy Communion should use alcohol-based liquid hand sanitizer just prior to distribution (at least 60% alcohol to be effective). Bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer can also be placed on little tables at the head of the aisle as people come forward. People are then able to sanitize their own hands before they receive the bread.

3. Regarding receiving the wine:

- Intinction is the least healthy way to receive the wine, since some people will inadvertently touch the wine with their fingers as they dip the bread. Fingers carry far more germs than our lips do. If intinction is used, it is safer for the communicant to give the piece of bread to the person serving the wine, who then dips the bread into the wine for them in a consistently safe way without touching the wine with their fingers and then places the bread in the communicant’s mouth without touching their tongue.
- Scientific tests have shown that drinking from the common cup does not spread germs, providing the cup has a silver finish. The interaction of the alcohol in the wine and the silver of the cup actively kills germs. Ceramic or non-silver cups do not protect against germs. After each person drinks from the cup, servers need to wipe the rim of the cup inside and out with the purificator and rotate the cup before the next person drinks.
- If individual glasses are used, the altar guild must diligently wash their hands as they prepare all of the communion ware and particularly before filling the individual glasses.

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*Coronavirus, continued from page 2*

- This may be a good occasion to remind people of a core principle of our Lutheran Eucharistic theology, namely that Christ is fully present and grace is fully received even when receiving just one of the two elements. Therefore, a person may choose to receive only the bread on a particular occasion. A respectful gesture is then to bow to the common cup when it is offered without drinking.

### **How do we care for each other during the week?**

During this time of heightened health awareness, it would be good to recruit congregation members who can check in by phone with other members who may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, or any other seasonal illness. The love of God becomes incarnate in a congregation that actively cares for each other, especially in a time of greater anxiety and risk.

In concluding, I leave you with these **two resources**.

Emmy Yang, a Christian woman from Wuhan, China, who is a Graduate Fellow at Duke Divinity School and also a medical student at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York, wrote a very helpful article in the current Christianity Today entitled, *Is It Faithful to Flee an Epidemic? What Martin Luther Teaches Us About Coronavirus*.

Her article summarizes Luther's teaching during an outbreak of the Plague in Wittenberg about whether Christians should care for one another in times of risk. Here is the link to that article. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/january-web-only/martin-luther-coronavirus-wuhan-chinese-new-year-christians.html>

Finally, I offer this prayer written by The Rt. Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce, Episcopal Bishop Suffragan, Diocese of Los Angeles, to which I added the last petition.

*Holy and gracious God, give us the strength to meet the health crisis looming around us. Enlighten researchers that they may discover the right vaccine against this disease. Guide the doctors, nurses and all medical technicians working with those who are infected to take correct actions for their care. Protect all medical staff and family or friends caring for those who are ill. Bring together the governments and governmental agencies around the world to work together to eradicate this health threat. Guide our congregation as we care for one another and ourselves. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech

## Congregations in Transition –March 2020

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

<b>Congregations</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Pastoral Care</b>
Christ, Federal Way	P	TR	Pr. Mark Peterson
Emanuel, Yelm	P	Pulpit Supply	Louise Buckles
Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Tacoma	P	TR	Pr. Linda Milks
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*

## On The Road with the Bishop



- Feb. 1**      **Attended our Southwestern Washington Synod Council meeting held at Gull Harbor Lutheran Church in Olympia, *shown right*, served by Pastor Suzanne Appelo.**



- Feb. 6**      **Visited our State Capitol in Olympia to participate in the Faith Action Network day of Advocacy.**





**Feb. 6-8** Attended a Board of Regents meeting at Pacific Lutheran University. On a walk through campus, we visited the two-room Natural History museum in Rieke Science Hall, *shown left*, where they have an exhibit of Pacific Northwest plants and animals, including this otter!

**Feb. 9** Preached at Redeemer Lutheran in Fircrest, WA, served by Pastor Greg Kaurin, whose adorable son, Anan, I met for the first time, *shown right*.



**Feb. 16** Celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Resurrection Lutheran in Tacoma, served by Pastor Karen Bates Olson, *shown left*.





Feb. 20 Visited Our Saviour's Lutheran in Bremerton, *shown left*, for a conversation time with church members and leaders from the Peninsula Conference of our Synod.

Feb. 23 Preached at Family of Christ Lutheran in Vancouver, served by Pastor Kit Neely, *shown right*.



Feb. 24-26 Met at the Menucha Retreat Center on the Columbia River with the bishops and staff members of all six synods in Region I of the ELCA, *shown left*. (Alaska, Northwest WA, Southwestern WA, Northwest Intermountain, Oregon and Montana). We enjoyed worshipping together, planning for the future, and supporting one another in our ministries.

## Get a Flu Shot

Get a flu shot. It's cold and flu season. These more common respiratory illnesses have affected our communities—especially the flu. So far this season 21 deaths have been confirmed from the flu in Washington state, including two children who died, the state Department of Health reports. The flu vaccine is your best protection against the flu. It's not too late to get your flu shot.



The latest update from health officials says flu activity in the state is elevated, with more than 1,800 patients reporting flu-like systems during the last week of December alone - the most recent period for which data is available.



## SWWA Synod Celebrates Women's Ordination

Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4pm our Synod will gather at Trinity Lutheran Church, Parkland for a worship service celebrating 50 years of Lutheran women being ordained in the United States, 40 years of women of color being ordained, and 10 years of LGBTQIA+ individuals being able to serve freely.

This festive service, hosted by Trinity Lutheran and the Southwestern Washington Synod, will include a procession of women, special music from PLU's University Singers and other guest musicians. It will be followed by a reception in Thompson Hall.

Congregations throughout the Synod are encouraged to attend!

For more information, contact Pastor Rebecca Shjerven, Bishop's Associate ([shjervr1@plu.edu](mailto:shjervr1@plu.edu)) or Pastor Jonette Blakney at Trinity Lutheran Church ([jonette.blakney@gmail.com](mailto:jonette.blakney@gmail.com))

## Group carrying message of friendship about to depart for Africa

By Rachel Pritchett, Namibia Task Force, [rachelpritchett@msn.com](mailto:rachelpritchett@msn.com)

Our synod's companion relationship with Lutheran churches in Namibia continues in May as three of us visit our friends in Africa.



Chriss and Brian Brickert of Faith Lutheran Church of Shelton and myself will join 50 others throughout the ELCA to meet in consultation with 50 religious leaders of Namibia and a dozen other southern Africa nations with  
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*Namibia, Continued from page 7*

ELCA companion relationships. Our goal in this three-day consultation in Johannesburg will be to worship together, listen and learn from each other, and strategize our relationships for the future. Specifically, we'll look at issues such as the future of Lutheran theological education across the region as seminaries there struggle to continue. We'll examine gender justice and care for creation. That's the short list.

I will be the communication consultant. With Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Bishop MJ Ubane of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, I will produce a summary of the consultation.

The Brickerts then will join a group traveling to the north of Namibia to greet our many friends within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. That leg of the journey will be led by Bishop Tracie Bartholomew of the New Jersey Synod. We're looking at extending that trip into Angola, where Lutheran churches have expressed a desire to begin a companion relationship with the ELCA. We cannot wait to learn what the Brickerts discover.

I approach this time with many emotions. I look back with gratitude on the many years our synod has been in this relationship. We tried to start a large garden to feed AIDS orphans, sent textbooks to a seminary, delivered knitted hats to a hospital up north where babies were suffering from malnutrition, and we supported children's hostels in the south of Namibia. But I also look back with frustration that we could not do more to aid a country Lutherans helped free 30 years ago, but where poverty and now lack of hope prevail. I feel optimism, because I know I will find renewal for our companion relationship.

Please pray for us as we travel. We'll report back when we return.

## **Affordable Housing and the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

*The Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger, Director for Evangelical Mission*

In Martin Luther's teaching on the 7th commandment in the Large Catechism (you shall not steal), he provides guidance for how we can think about our shared work on affordable housing opportunities in the Southwestern Washington Synod.

“(All people) are also obligated faithfully to protect their neighbors' property and to promote and further their interest, especially when they get money, wages, and provisions.”

Last October, the Synod Council officially supported synod resources being directed toward congregations providing land for affordable housing in their areas. It has been an epiphany to learn that the Holy Spirit is already at work in the dreams of congregations long before the Synod Council acted. In my work I have learned that the gifts of congregations are already being mobilized to address the needs of neighbors. Part of my work with the synod is to  
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*Affordable Housing, continued from page 8*

connect congregations with stakeholders, leaders, experts, and grant money so that congregations can best address the pressing need for affordable housing. Congregations are responding to the invitation to share.

Nine synod congregations have submitted land specs that begin the process for determining how many housing units can be built on each congregational property. When we combine our efforts, the costs for providing affordable housing go down. As we have joined our efforts for affordable housing, God has raised up 11 leaders to serve on the Affordable Housing Task Force. Our goal is that a quarter of synod congregations (~22) submit land specs for this project. What can you do support this affordable housing effort? First, you are invited to pray for this work in the synod. Second, if your congregation has land that could be used for affordable housing, work with your church council to submit land specs. Third, if you feel called to help more directly with this work, I invite you to join me on the Affordable Housing Task Force. Fourth, I will be facilitating a workshop on affordable housing at the synod education events this spring—please attend! Thank you for your support in our shared ministry that further meet the needs of our neighbors. I trust the Spirit is at work in our shared effort.

*al Mission, SWWA Synod*

## **Summer Sun, Summer Fun!**

*By Beth Ann Johnson, Synod Hunger Committee member*

The latest ELCA World Hunger VBS Program is now available for FREE online: “On Earth as it is in Heaven” is a five day VBS Program that looks at The Lord’s Prayer, with each day focusing on a different petition in the prayer, and how it relates to helping our neighbor.

With Story Time, Games, Snack Ideas, Crafts, and a Simulation Station, this free resource provides everything you need for a successful Vacation Bible School. In addition to the program, you can download a “toolkit” for free, as well as posters and attendance certificates. Just add volunteers and kids, and you can have a great summer experience for your children and youth. For more information, or to download resources, go to:

<https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger#HungerEd>

**ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants** will open for registration on March 18<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup>, and the application process is April 1-May 22. Can you name a ministry that, using a comprehensive approach, draws on the strengths of its community to break the cycle of poverty and hunger — for good? Invite that ministry to apply for an ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grant!

## Online Registration for the May Youth Weekends at Holden Village OPEN

Choose from May 15-17 or May 22-24

Registration is open NOW thru April 16 (or until filled).

The theme: Transformation!

Change is constant and transformation is sacred. How can we express our changing hearts and minds to speak out as change makers in God's World?

170 people max per session. | Cost: \$205 per person | To Register:

<https://www.lutheransnw.org/content.cfm?id=558>

## Spring Synod Educational Gatherings

Building Community. Being Church.

Building Community.

Locations and Dates: (pick the best one for your schedule) All sites 9am – 3:00pm

- Holy Trinity, Port Angeles- Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>
- Messiah, Vancouver- Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>
- St Marks by the Narrows, Tacoma- Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>
- 

**What is an Educational Gathering?:** Time to learn and worship together with other ELCA members in the Southwestern Washington Synod.



Being Church.

**Who Should Attend?:** Lay members and roster ministers who want to learn and be a part of the whole church.

**Workshop options: (Most workshops will be presented at each location)**

- Growing Young (all sites)
- What could it mean if the Synod was RIC (all sites)
- Care Practices (Tacoma only)
- 3 Things you can do on Social Media to Build Community (all sites)
- Essential Ingredients for a Healthy Church Council (all sites)
- Raising Money for Ministry (all sites)
- Church Safety (all sites)
- Working with Community Partners while maintaining your Non-Profit Status (all sites)
- Affordable Housing (all sites)
- Congregation Safety (all sites)
- PSALM (Program for Strengthening Lay Ministry (all locations)
- Art and your community (Tacoma and Vancouver locations)
- Companionate Integrity (Port Angeles and Vancouver locations)

Online registration open soon.



## Spring Forward!

On Sunday, March 8, a majority of Americans must set their traditional clocks one hour ahead as the time changes at 2 a.m., making it 3 a.m. Most modern electronic devices will update automatically but you may have to adjust your car, microwave, stove or analog clocks

## Congregation News

**First Lutheran Cemetery of First In Poulsbo** was awarded a Cemetery Preservation Capital Grant in the amount of \$21,743 from the State of Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. This money is to be used for improvements to the cemetery for accessibility and safety.

**St Paul Lutheran, Vancouver WA** was recently in noted in the Columbian newspaper in an article on their lunchtime contemplative prayer time.

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2020/feb/23/vancouver-church-offers-midday-silent-prayer-session/>

Our Saviours Lutheran, Bremerton has an Imagine group (the synod's congregational redevelopment program) that is working with their coach, Char Leone. They are having ongoing discussions about a new church logo and new mission statement. //