

# NEWS FROM THE PEWS

JUNE 2022



## *A message from Pastor Kristi*

Greetings, Fir-Conway Lutheran family!

While we enter another month, I give thanks for the sunshine we get to experience, even if it's briefly. For me, sunshine helps to warm my bones and renews my equilibrium. It seems like the world is constantly trying to knock us off our stride and cause us to stumble into the unescapable chaos that inhabits our relationships, and interactions with one another. There has been to many tragedies piling up, and it seems like we haven't had time to properly step back, take a deep breath, and grieve.

It is important, to take time and pause. Pause and remember those things that renew our souls. For me it's, sunshine, soil, the breeze coming off of the water, smell of lilacs, and flowers, laughter, company of others. Find those things that restore your equilibrium. Especially if it is our tears that we offer up, they can be a balm for our hurting soul. Find ways to express yourself, and be restored, even if slightly, to make it through the next wave that tries to bombard you.

As a congregation, we've had cause for tears, and for celebration. I want to recognize all we've experienced, and lived through, not only in this past year, but past months. We get to honor those who go before us, the saints we lost this past year, and those whose lives impacted us that we remember daily. The history within these walls that inform who we are as a congregation, while dreaming of who we would want to be. Not losing the richness but holding onto both and finding a beautiful blending that we each can live with.

Looking forward, on June 17<sup>th</sup>, we get to honor Barbara Craner who passed away in December. Her funeral will be held at Fir-Conway Lutheran Cemetery at 11 a.m.

Then on June 25<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m., we honor Anna Ankrum, sister of Solveig Lee, here at the church. There will be a graveside service at 10 a.m., at Fir-Conway Lutheran Cemetery.

We also get to celebrate the life events, new life entering our world, new unions of couples joining together in marriage, and those celebrating life's milestones, like graduation.

I give thanks to the life within those who call Fir-Conway Lutheran Church home. Whether they are able to attend in person or are away from us at this time. I do hope that each of you will consider sending your picture in to be added to our new Picture Directory which will be coming out later this Summer.

Speaking of sunshine, we will be having a Church wide clean up day, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m., bring your rakes, shovels, garden gloves, brooms, pressure washers, etc. Help us get the Church prepped for Summer!

Finally! Mark your calendar for the annual Pie Auction!!!! July 3<sup>rd</sup> after Church.

We would love to see you and recognize you as part of this church body. If you've had a change of address, email address or telephone number, please let us know the best way to keep you informed.

Blessings, Pastor Kristi

*The Spirit* is a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA. It is intended for synod members,

congregations & organizations.

They are encouraged to reproduce these articles in their own monthly organizational publications.

## From the Bishop

Today I walked my dogs. As I was walking, one person told me how beautiful my dogs were. (I agree!) Another person told me they were so glad to see the sun. (Me too!) Another mock-yelled after me when I didn't greet him, "Hey! Aren't you going to say hello?" (I smiled and waved.) I love my neighborhood in South Everett. I especially love that there are several languages being spoken in the homes surrounding mine: there is a multitude of ethnicities, there are different religious expressions, children's voices are heard at all hours of the day, and there are different food smells wafting out windows at dinner time.

Even as I experience belonging and love for this neighborhood, though, I am also aware of the troubles and heartaches here. A little girl was hit by a car and died here a few years ago. People have been affected by COVID. Rising prices are causing some to not be able to live here. People who are renting are being forced out when landlords decide to sell. And there are people affected by meth, domestic violence, and so much more behind the walls of the homes in my neighborhood.

I think of all of us in the "neighborhood" of the Northwest Washington Synod and how I love our neighborhood. I love the diversity we have in our synod. I love the different geographies, landscapes, languages, ethnicities, cultures, and foods in our synod. As I journey through the 110+ congregations and ministry sites of this synod, I am aware of the deep joys and crushing sorrows, and the connections and the loneliness that surround us. Much like my little neighborhood, there is diversity and there is belonging here. And much like my little neighborhood, there is loss and there is grief and there is difficulty. We cannot ignore that there are thorny and deep-seated social and relational complexities within us as a church and in society as a whole.

Holding the "both/and" of this reality – the true joy and the deep sorrow and frustration – is why the theme for this year's 2022 Synod Assembly is *abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*.

Now let me say this: While it is true that some may look at our theme, "Abound in Hope" and assume that we are naively optimistic or positive. Others may look at our theme, "Abound in Hope" and think that we do not understand the mountain that we must climb. Still others may look at our theme, "Abound in Hope" and wonder how – with the pain Church has caused many or the sins of our ancestors – that we are only living in the present and not acknowledging the past. To those, this is what I say:

We are abounding in hope. And because we are abounding in hope we are invited into complex and difficult conversations through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are able to face the realities of life today - knowing that we are not alone. We do not ignore or downplay or pretend that there are not sad and horrifying realities in our world today. We fiercely hold on to the hope that comes only through Jesus. And, knowing this, together, we are called to be, share in, and live into the good news that comes through our risen Savior Jesus. And so ... we are *abounding in hope*.

I am thankful to be living in this neighborhood of Northwest Washington Synod with you.  
May we abound in hope through God's Spirit living in this world and into God's future.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee  
[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)

From Synod Vice President Kay Edgerton

As I write this, we are working on the final preparations for Synod Assembly. We are looking forward to having the opportunity to gather in person as God's people after two years of physical separation. We will worship together, learn together, and do the business of the synod together. This year, most of that business is around electing synod officers and council members and approving the spending plans for the next two years. Last year, we also reviewed and amended our synod constitution. This year we have two resolutions/memorials to consider. A memorial is when our synod assembly sends a communication/request to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly for action. It has been some time since we have had resolutions or memorials to debate and vote on, but a look back at previous assemblies shows that the NWWA Synod has a history of proposing and debating resolutions around many social and political issues.

There is a full list on the synod website, but here are a few highlights:

- 2008 – a resolution against violence and discrimination on the basis of gender orientation and gender identity
- 2010 – a resolution supporting a more just and equitable tax structure in Washington State
- 2013 – a resolution urging divestment from fossil fuel corporations
- 2015 – a memorial to CWA on Eco-Reformation in the context of climate change
- 2016 – a memorial to CWA repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery

As you can see, this synod has long been active in encouraging all three expressions of the church (congregations, synods, and churchwide) to act faithfully in public life and to advocate for more just and equitable laws. I wanted to lift this up because we are once again in a tumultuous time in public life when people of faith may be at odds with the state and even with one another. I have had many ELCA Lutheran friends tell me they didn't know that we have social statements and messages that provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. They are meant to help communities and individuals with moral formation, discernment, and thoughtful engagement with current social issues as we participate in God's work in the world.

With the Supreme Court apparently about to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, some of my friends have asked where my church stands on this issue. In answer, I point them to the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion which was adopted in 1991. Reading it today it may seem slightly dated, especially around the question of when a fetus is considered viable, but it does describe how this church, as a community supportive of life, responds to the reality of abortion. If you are curious about this issue, I encourage you to read it here: <https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Abortion>. I know it has helped me articulate my position on the issue.

Abortion is, of course, just one area where we might seek guidance from the church. In fact, three years ago, in response to growing concerns about the best way to engage politically as people of faith, Churchwide Assembly was tasked with creating a social message and a social statement regarding civics and faith. In 2020, the ELCA released its social message: "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy." In May of this year, there were Zoom hearings held as part of the process in developing what will become the more comprehensive social statement around this issue. We are reminded

that Lutherans care about government because it is a gift from God intended for the safety and flourishing of human life.

If you are interested in the memorials and resolutions that will be brought before Synod Assembly this year, they are posted on the synod website. We are church. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world.

**Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:**

- Executive Committee met on May 12. Among other actions, we approved the budget plan to be presented to Synod Assembly and made final preparations for the June council meeting.
- I participated in the Civics and Faith Listening Event to learn more about the work on the new ELCA social statement about civics and faith.
- Budget and Resolution hearings were held in preparation for Synod Assembly.

Kay Edgerton, Vice President  
NW Washington Synod/ELCA  
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### Synod Assembly News

Below are the 2 resolutions that Kelly McKnight and I will be voting on at Synod Assembly this Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you have any questions.

## Resolution A: Reparations and Land Return

**Whereas**, in 2016 the Churchwide Assembly [repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery](#), “acknowledging and repenting from this church’s complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members,” and,

**Whereas**, such evils of colonialism include land theft and forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands, silencing their stories and ancestral practices rooted in their sacred land, and

**Whereas**, in September of 2021, the Church Council of the ELCA approved the [Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People](#), which includes a commitment to “encourage and support wherever possible the buyback and return of tribal land, and further commit to support creative programs resulting in reparations for stolen lands,”<sup>1</sup> and,

**Whereas**, every building owned by an ELCA congregation and organization, except those on reservations, is built on confiscated tribal land, which continues to rob each generation of Indigenous people sustenance, wealth, life ways, and the experience of familial relationships with the land itself, thus perpetuating historical inequity, and,

**Whereas**, Indigenous peoples are calling for restoration, restitution and reparation, and, there is a growing reparations and Land Back movement in which families, churches, denominations, camps, universities, and other land-holding organizations are returning land or providing compensation for the use of land to Indigenous tribes and nations, and,

**Whereas**, there are a variety of ways that ELCA congregations, ministries and associated organizations can participate in reparations and land return, including transferring land and closed ministry sites to tribal nations, or inviting tribal nations into conversations about land use when congregations are consolidated, or participating in “Real Rent” programs, such as the one currently available through the [Duwamish Tribe](#).

**Therefore be it RESOLVED**, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage all individual ELCA members, as well as congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, seminaries, camps, associated organizations and partners, to become educated about the Indigenous peoples who thrived, prior to European contact, on the land they currently inhabit; and to learn about, and learn from, the Indigenous peoples who currently live within at least 100 miles of that land, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage all individual ELCA members, as well as congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, seminaries, camps, associated organizations and partners, to “support creative programs resulting in reparations for stolen lands”<sup>2</sup> in partnership with Indigenous peoples, including returning land (and any structures built on it) to Native tribes, and when direct return is not feasible or desirable by the tribes, to return the proceeds from the sale of land to the ELCA Native American Ministry Fund or other local Native-led ministries or organizations.

Submitted by Rev. Erik Kindem; Rev. Darla DeFrance; Rev. Terry Kylo; Rev. Charis Weathers; Rev. Chelsea Globe; Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin; Rev. David Wold

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from page 4, [Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America TO AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**1. What is the financial impact of this resolution on the synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?**

None.

**2. What are the personnel implications within our synod (or churchwide)?**

Synod staff and others who work with congregations, ministries and other institutions of the church considering land sale and/or closure may need to devote extra time to the process, as they invite those entities to consider relationships with and impacts upon Tribal communities as they discern the implications and opportunities of sharing accumulated assets or property.

**3. Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?**

If the 2022 Churchwide Assembly chooses to respond to this memorial and similar memorials from other synods, Churchwide staff will implement plans to encourage all ELCA members, congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, seminaries, camps, associated organizations and partners to work with local tribal leaders in order to build relationships and potentially facilitate reparations. Within the territory of the NW Washington Synod, the synod council could appoint an implementation task force that would help establish guidelines for implementing the resolution. Other means could also be considered.

**4. How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?**

In the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly mandate on “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” (ELCA Social Policy Resolution CA16.02.04), we committed “To repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery as an example of the ‘improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword’ (Augsburg Confession Article XXVIII, Latin text), and to acknowledge and repent from this church’s complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members.” As we seek to live into meaningful actions that demonstrate the commitments expressed in the “*Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People*,” approved in September of 2021 by the Church Council of the ELCA, this resolution outlines practical steps that may be taken by ELCA members, congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, seminaries, camps, associated organizations, and partners.

**Resolution B:  
Call for review of granting disability status to person experiencing Mental Illness**

Whereas, Portico Benefits Services provides disability benefits to rostered ministers of this church; and

Whereas, to be eligible for this coverage a sponsoring entity (congregation, synod, churchwide organization or agency) needs to cover salary and benefits for 60 days before a rostered minister is able to apply for these benefits; and

Whereas, persons experiencing mental illness have resigned their call before this period is completed and have been denied these benefits because of this technicality; and

Whereas, synod offices or sponsoring entity do not always know that the resignation has been submitted until after receiving it and the effective date does not meet the 60-day requirement; and

Whereas, the rostered minister might otherwise qualify for these benefits except for this requirement;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to ask Portico Benefit Services and the Conference of Bishops to review the requirements of the Portico Disability program for persons suffering mental illness; and be it further

**Resolved** that specific attention be given to the ways in which timing related to the rostered minister's resignation affects potential eligibility for coverage; and be it further

**Resolved** that a report of this review be given to the Church Council by its 2023 fall meeting.

**Submitted by:** Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger

**1. What is the financial impact of this resolution on the synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?**

There should be limited financial impact to the Churchwide budget or to Portico Benefit Services for the review process. There would be financial impact to the Disability Plan assuming that there would be more individuals qualifying for this benefit. This cost would be covered by the plan through the normal rate setting process.

**2. What are the personnel implications within our synod (or churchwide)?**

Portico Benefit Services would have staff that would need to participate in the review. Synod Relations, the Conference of Bishops and/or the Office of the Secretary would also need to participate in the review. This type of review is a regular activity for both organizations.

**3. Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?**

Churchwide staff would coordinate the implementation of this resolution. I assume it will fall to the Office of the Secretary and to the staff of Portico Benefit Services.

**4. How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?**

The ELCA has placed a priority on the health of its rostered ministers. The existence of Portico Benefit Services is required by the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This constitutional requirement shows the importance of supporting rostered ministers. This specific situation happens rarely but when it does the impact on the roster minister or former rostered minister is significant and is a hardship on them and on those around them. Addressing this issue would be a further step in caring for those who lead this church.



## Want an Easy Way to Donate to FCLC While Shopping?

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On your first visit to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Your selection will be remembered, and then every eligible purchase you make through **AmazonSmile** will result in a donation. You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile.

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1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)
2. Sign in with your **Amazon.com** credentials
3. Choose a **charitable organization** to receive donations, or search for the charity of your choice
4. Select your charity: **Fir-Conway Lutheran Church**

## Church Council Minutes May 2022 Fir-Conway Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

### Old Business:

- May 22nd Sunday School event-Seed bombs
- Discussion regarding custodial responsibilities when the church is used by outside sources
- Confirmation plans with Burlington Lutheran
- Recognition Sunday-one graduate-June 12th
- VBS-Lutherwood is understaffed this year. Pastor has visited with the Anacortes pastor, with the possibility of joining their VBS in June
- Elevator-second payment will be due when products are delivered, proposed shipping date is June 24<sup>th</sup>.



### New Business:

- Donations were acknowledged from Barker and Alexander families and cards were signed by council to be sent out
- Funeral for Anna Akrum is June 25th at 11am
- Preschool-We will discuss at the council retreat the possibility of the preschool contributing to the heating costs
- Pastor has a backup plan if her return flight is delayed

8:44 pm meeting adjourned

We closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted

Lori Walser

FCLC Secretary

### Upcoming Events

6/8 Church Council at 6:30 p.m.

6/12 Graduation Celebration, recognition and cake following during Fellowship Hour.

6/12 Last chance for professional photos for the new Picture Directory. There are still plenty of slots open. No sitting fee

6/17 Barbara Craner's Memorial Service at Fir-Conway Lutheran Cemetery at 11 a.m.

6/18 Church Grounds clean up, bring your rakes, pruners, shovels, gardening gloves, etc. Let's get the grounds cleaned up for Summer! Will be starting at 9 a.m.

6/25 Anna Ankrum's Funeral. Graveside will be at 10 a.m., Church Service at 11 a.m., there will be sandwiches and beverages provided after the service.

6/29-30<sup>th</sup> VBS at Peace Lutheran Church in Silvana at 5:30-8:30 p.m., dinner is included.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 Office 10am - Sunday	30 Office 11am - Memorial	31 Email Jeannette Office	1 Office	2 Office	3	4
5 Office 10am - Sunday	6 10am - Worship &	7 5:30pm - Property &	8 6pm - Stewardship 6:30pm - Council	9	10	11
12 Office 10am - Sunday 11am - Evangelism 2:30pm - Friendship	13 Office	14 Office	15 Office	16 Office	17 6:30pm - Amanda	18 AA Meeting 9am - Spring
19 Office 10am - Sunday	20 Office Portico pmt	21 Office	22 Office	23 Office	24 10am - Graveside 11am - Anna	25
26 Office 10am - Sunday	27 Office	28 Office	29 Office	30 Email Jeannette Office	1	2