

The Zion Flame September 2022

Zion Lutheran Church

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Pastor Becky Langholz

Dear ones in Christ,

Life is a journey. I know this idea is overused, but perhaps this is because it rings true. Specifically, we might say that life is a journey across the sea. Christians have often considered themselves passengers on a ship through the chaotic waters of this earthly life. The part of the sanctuary where the congregation sits in the pews is traditionally called the “nave”, from the Latin word “navis” for ship. If you look up, some sanctuaries are designed to look like the underside of a boat. I think this age-old idea still helps us make sense of our day-to-day lives.

Some of you have had much experience boating—on fishing boats, crabbing boats or leisure boats. Some of you even served on large warships in the Navy. You know the many threats—storms, choppy waters, no wind, claustrophobia, structural damage, losing direction and a large, powerful body of water easily capable of swallowing us up. Everyone needs a sea-worthy vessel and some knowledge of navigation—and still even then, life jackets!

Water travel was common in Jesus’ day. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all include a story of Jesus and disciples stuck in a mighty storm (see Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:36-41 and Luke 8:23-25). As the wind is howling and whipping up the waves, Jesus sleeps. The disciples waken him in a panic and beg him to save them. His command quickly calms the waters. For Jesus, even the worst of what the seas of life can present is no reason for anxiety and fear. He is at peace in all things, and his peaceful presence calms the storms of others.

We all experience so much in this life—joy, sorrow, gratitude and grief. What storms are passing through in these days for you? How have you been able to respond? Take a moment to imagine the kind of vessel that is carrying you. Is it sturdy and well-maintained or beaten down and weathered? A single rowboat or a large, luxurious power boat with room for many? A working ship, with everyone playing a part? An older boat, used by many others before you, or one that is new and shiny?

My prayer is that you all might feel yourselves safe and secure in the vessel of God’s love and grace. God’s promises of peace and abundance can carry us through hard times. My prayer is that we might know ourselves to be moving through life together and that we might know that we are never alone in the storms that we face. My prayer is that we might lean on one another for encouragement and prayer, and that more than anything, we might lean on Jesus. As the hymn says (ELW #696), “Jesus calls us, o’er the tumult of our life’s wild restless sea, day by day his clear voice sounding, saying, “Christian, follow me!”

Peace be with you,

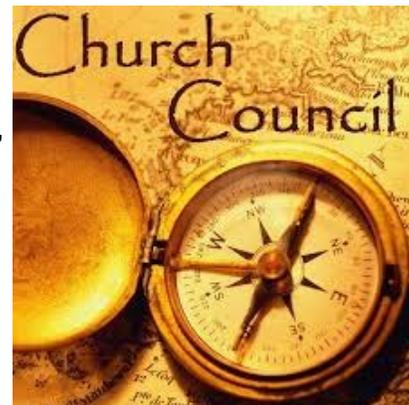
Pr. Becky Langholz

Pr. Becky will not be in the office on Monday, Sept 5th in observance of Labor Day. She can be reached on her cell phone: (360) 393-6630.

Pr. Becky is in the church office Mondays & Thursdays from 9am-12pm.

She also works from home and can be reached on her cell phone: (360) 393-6630 or via email at pastor@zionlutheranwhatcom.org Fridays are her day off; only emergency or prayer chain calls/texts on Fridays, please.

Did you know you can give to our church online? You can even set up automatic withdrawals or give to specific special funds. Check out our church website: www.zionlutheranwhatcom.org and the "Give" tab for more information.



The Church Council will meet on Thursday, September 8th 4:30pm. Reports or agenda items for the meeting are due by Weds., August 31st. Continue to hold our church leaders in prayer and thank them for their time and effort.

Update on our summer painting project: Painting of the parsonage and its garage is complete and looks great! The total came in more than expected at \$4,488.30, but we had raised \$4,570 and so enough money to cover this expense. Thank you for your generosity. Unfortunately, the painters were unable to take on the project of fixing the stucco on the south-facing chimney wall. We are working out a plan to complete this work..

Financial info (through July 2022)

General Fund: \$31,635.00
 Special Funds: \$12,165.00
 Thrivent Mutual Fund: \$22,059.37
 Receipts YTD: \$66,021.22
 Expenses YTD: \$61,636.29
 Net: \$4,384.93



During the month of August, Zion received an extremely generous donation of \$20,000. \$5,000 of this was designated to be spent at the Church Council's discretion. \$15,000 was designated for our longer-term reserves (currently invested in a Thrivent Financial mutual fund). Please note, these numbers are not yet included in the fund totals for July listed above. **We give great thanks for faithful people who live with such generous hearts and to God who always provides for us so richly!**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Outreach and Missions

Zion's on-going collections:

- Non-perishable food items
- Household items and toiletries
- Bottled water

We partner with local non-profits to get these items to community members in need.

The Interfaith Coalition holds its annual fundraising auction on Sunday, September 18th at 5:30pm at Twin Sisters Brewing Company in Bellingham. For more information, visit their website: <https://www.interfaith-coalition.org/auction>.

With our partners United Church of Ferndale and Christ Lutheran, Zion will provide meals for the Family Promise program the week of September 18th. Family Promise is a program in through the Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County that provides transitional housing to families experiencing homelessness.



If you would like to help with this effort, please contact Pr. Becky.

Zion will collect your aluminum cans for recycling! Proceeds have funded many church improvements over the years. Drop off cans in the bin by the basement ramp door. Speak to Brenda Bannerman for more details.

Did you know?? It can take up to 150 years for these cans to deteriorate if they are not recycled.



We'll gather to clean the church on Saturday, September 3rd at 9am. Cleaning and maintaining our church are volunteer efforts, and many hands make light work. Come on out for an hour of vacuuming, dusting and generally sprucing up our beloved church building.

WORSHIP

Connect with Zion online: Resources for worship and reflection are available on our church [YouTube channel](#). We also live-stream the worship service there each Sunday at 10am. You can also find the church on Facebook.

Save the date: Sunday, October 30th at 5pm, Whatcom Cluster-wide Reformation Event, location TBD. Save the date for an opportunity to gather with other ELCA congregations in our county as we celebrate our heritage as people and a church that are “always being made new”. More details coming soon.

Outdoor Worship on August 28th

We enjoyed a beautiful day and lovely setting to worship God together. Thank you to all who helped to create this special gathering.



Zion Lutheran Church Mission Statement

Since 1903

The beloved, forgiven people of God.

Called to spread the Good News so as to build up the body of Christ.

Gifted to share the healing love of Jesus Christ with our hurting world.

Empowered by the Spirit to be a caring country congregation for ministry to one another and the larger community.



Zion's Relational Covenant

In our life together, we will...

Give thanks to God for the gift of our church and each other. Honor and respect our diverse opinions, perspectives and work-styles. Take responsibility for our own feelings and deal with issues directly. Ask clarifying questions and avoid making assumptions. Speak up honestly in the proper time and place. Make decisions in a transparent manner. Support decisions made by the group. Pray for unity in our congregation.

**From the Spirit**

September 2022

This month, we share a joint article from Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee and Synod Vice President Kay Edgerton regarding the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, held August 8-12 in Ohio. “But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things.” (Luke 10:41) Eight voting members from the Northwest Washington Synod attended the ELCA’s Churchwide Assembly. While we were excited to be together with almost 1000 other Lutherans, we also all felt somewhat like Martha. There were so many things that distracted and worried us: the continuing COVID pandemic, monkeypox, deadly heat waves, forest fires, flooding, war, and so many other things. For many in our delegation, traveling to Columbus, Ohio (where the Churchwide Assembly was held) was the first trip many had taken since early 2020. For many, traveling to the assembly was anxiety-producing. Additionally, it was apparent from the pre-assembly documents that we would be wrestling with some topics that could be divisive and difficult. All in all, we had a new understanding of Martha’s worry and distraction.

However, just as Jesus responded to Martha’s worries, Jesus responded to all of us heading to the Assembly. Jesus reminded Martha and reminded us, “Only one thing is needed.” As we gathered from all parts of the ELCA, each with our own worries, anxieties, and agendas, what we had in common was the “one thing:” Jesus. And we proclaim, trust, and believe that we are saved by grace and that the work we gathered there to do was not ours, but God’s. As ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton reminded us in her opening sermon, “The Church is not ours. The Church is God’s.”

Throughout the week we worshiped together, we ate together, we talked with one another. We laughed and we cried. We prayed, we reflected, we lamented, and we asked for forgiveness. We listened and we repented. We danced (well ... Bishop Shelley and a few others danced) and we rejoiced at God’s amazing love, grace, mercy, and justice.

We did the work of the Church.

One of the most emotional and moving moments of the Assembly was Bishop Eaton’s apology on behalf of the entire Church to the community of Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria Peregrina, a community that was harmed and traumatized by actions not only of individuals, but also systems and processes in all three expressions of this Church. There were members of this community present at the assembly to receive the apology which was made in both Spanish and English. Their grace-filled response to Bishop Eaton moved many to tears. As they offered forgiveness, they also were clear that there is much work to do towards ending racism and repairing the relationship between the ELCA and their community. We have much work to do!

On day two the assembly was invited by the ELCA American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association to wear red to bring awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The assembly received a presentation on the [“Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People”](#) adopted by the ELCA Church Council last September. The declaration was presented as part of the implementation of the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s [resolution](#) to repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery. Task force members gave examples to the assembly of what the ELCA has been doing to live out the declaration, closed with remarks by Vance Blackfox, who began last year in his newly created position as ELCA director for Indigenous ministries and tribal relations. The assembly also recognized the [ecumenical and interreligious](#) commitments of the church, including [“A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment”](#) (adopted 1991), [“A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community”](#) (adopted 1994), [“A Declaration of Interreligious Commitment”](#) (adopted 2019) and [“A Declaration of the ELCA to the Muslim Community”](#) (adopted 2022).

The voting members from the Northwest Washington Synod were active participants in all aspects of the assembly. We assisted in worship, we spoke to motions, we helped craft amendments, we connected with the voting members from other synods. We were BUSY!



The assembly adopted en bloc 19 memorials that covered topics such as gun violence, parental and family medical leave, and communion practices. Twelve memorials were removed from en bloc for separate consideration, including the two memorials* forwarded from our recent synod assembly. Here are just a few of the memorials that were considered and adopted:

Memorial B4: Restructure the Governance of the ELCA

The Church Council is called to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to “reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of the church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism.”

Memorial C3: Human Sexuality and Gift and Trust Revision

Authorizes a revision of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009) to reflect current church understanding, church policy, civil law, and public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender non-conforming couples.

Memorial A6: Advance Salary Equity

Authorizes a study regarding pay gaps for Rostered Ministers in the ELCA, especially as they relate to people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Memorial A8: Land Back*

This NWWA Synod-submitted memorial calls for deepened relationships with our Indigenous siblings and encourages us to “support creative programs of restorative justice in partnership with Indigenous people.”

Memorial A14: Roe v. Wade

Calls for conversation around the church’s teachings on abortion, gender justice, and related topics as well as reviewing the impact on pastoral counseling, the pastor-client relationship, and the rostered ministers and social ministry agencies and organizations of the ELCA.

Memorial B5: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility ELCA Governance Audit*

This is the other NWWA Synod-submitted memorial authorizes an audit of the church’s governing documents with an eye to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

In addition to memorials, we passed the triennial budget and elected a new Vice President of the ELCA. Congratulations to Imran Siddiqui, currently serving as the VP of the Southeastern Synod, on his election. Read more about him [HERE](#).

You may review the Churchwide Assembly Guide with all of the pre-assembly materials by simply signing in with your email [HERE](#). Alternatively, you may read summaries of each day's events [HERE](#). Or watch the plenary session recordings AND the worship service recordings [HERE](#) - you will glimpse of our delegation members assisting in worship and speaking to memorials!

We are so thankful for the elected voting members of our synod who joined us in Ohio for this important work: Pr. Rachel Swenson, Kasey Shultz, Laura Sasaki Norton (our newest synod staff member), Eli Daheim, Curt Eidem, and Frank Loulan. (While Pr. Esau Cuevas could not be with us due to illness, we are grateful for his willingness serve.)

As Bishop Patricia Davenport (bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod) reminded us on the final day of the Assembly, we are baptized children of God. We have received the promises of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation. And because of this, we are called out for the sake of the world. May we remember, as Jesus reminded Martha, that there is “one thing.” And that one thing, always, is Jesus.

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee & Vice President Kay Edgerton

bishop@lutheransnw.org & veep@lutheransnw.org



September Events



Camp Lutherwood and Retreat Center on Lake Samish celebrates its 75th Anniversary on Saturday, September 10th with an open house from 10-2pm. To RSVP, please call the camp office by September 2nd: (360) 734-7652. Visit the website: <https://www.cاملutherwood.org/celebrating-grace> for more information about the event.

On Saturday September 24th from 9am-12:30pm, Zion will host a “safeTALK” Suicide Prevention Workshop facilitated by ELCA Pastor John Swanson. This workshop is open to all community members 15 years and older who would like to be trained to support people experiencing mental and emotional distress. This is a community event; please spread the word. We have room for 10-45 participants. Cost will be \$15 per person. Please sign up by Thursday, September 8th by emailing the church office: office@zionlutheranwhatcom.org or by calling/texting Craig Johnson at (360) 319-5413.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



The ELCA (our church denomination) met for its Churchwide Assembly August 8-12 in Columbus, Ohio. For a summary of the actions taken, visit the ELCA website: <https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly>.

Photos from the Langholz Family road trip in August: at Alcatraz and Pr. Becky, Alec, Rory and Rusty at Redwood National Park.

