



## Northwest Washington Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear Beloveds in Christ,

I love these words from Isaiah 43, "But now thus says the Lord, the One who created you, O Jacob, the One who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Right now you may be feeling overwhelmed, sad and even bittersweet. Often, as one considers the future sustainability of their congregation, feelings of grief prevail. Meaningful memories of baptisms, Confirmations, weddings, funerals and so much more are what has shown Christ's love to you and to the community. The love you have experienced throughout the years has nurtured you and your congregation. It is true that there is likely heartache and concern as you anticipate a future that might feel less hopeful. In all this, know that you are not alone. The Spirit is and will continue to be at work in you as you gather, feast around the table, and extend love to each other.

Please know that as the pastor of this synod and as your bishop, I am here to support you and journey with you. The entire synod staff is here in prayer and to help you in this time. Whether your discernment is a new vision for revitalization or a new vision for the legacy of your property and assets, we are here to support and care for you. Please know and be assured, that above all else, you, the beloved people of God, are my number one concern. Buildings or assets are not the Church. You are. Our calling as your synod staff is to walk with, journey together, and serve God's people, especially in difficult times, and this means you! While the thought of closing may weigh heavily on your hearts, know that we are here to ease that burden, help as you look forward, and journey with you in the Holy Spirit

This site contains resources to begin a journey of holy conversations to help you listen to each other, to help us listen to you, and for all of us to listen to the Spirit together. This is not intended to be a checklist but only a guide. Additionally, as new resources become available, we will post them to this site.

Because I believe God's will is clearest in community, if you have yet to contact the synod office to express your intentions and concerns, please do so. We stand ready to come alongside you to listen, discern, and offer our support. I believe that however the Spirit leads, God will always keep God's promise to lead, love and comfort God's people...and myself, along with the entire synod staff is honored to be part of this journey with you.

In God's Peace and Hope,

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee  
Northwest Washington Synod