

# I-K Lutheran

## *Where God is doing new things*

July 2018

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. *Isaiah 43:1-2, 5-7*

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." *Luke 4:16-21*

*This is an excerpt of Bishop Gafkjen's sermon for the opening worship of this year's synod assembly. The full text and an audio recording of the sermon may be accessed at <http://livingcommunion.blogspot.com>.*



Friday morning, this past Friday morning, I was sitting on our deck off the back of our house working on this sermon. All of a sudden, a news helicopter flew over the house and that made me realize that the air was also filled with the sound of sirens.

Living where we live, I assumed that there must have been a car accident. We live near some major roads and, unfortunately, this happens with some frequency, so I set down my tablet and paused to pray for whoever was in that accident. As I was praying, a notification popped up on my phone to tell me that there had been a shooting at West Noblesville Middle School, fifteen minutes from our house. I knew then that all the commotion I had heard was first responders on their way to tend to those who were in need.

I was reminded immediately of Benton, Kentucky, another community in our synod, where this past January two students were killed and some eighteen injured at Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky. One of our congregations, St. Matthew by the Lake Lutheran Church, is in Benton.

Truth be told, I wept and prayed.

Then I did what any contemporary bishop does. I texted our pastor in Noblesville, Teri Ditslear, to offer her support and prayers. She responded as I knew she would. "I'm already at the high school." They had bused all the kids from the middle school where the shooting had happened to the high school and Pastor Teri was there.

Thankfully, only two people were injured, and nobody was killed, in great measure because of the quick response of one of the teachers. Like Pastor Teri and the first responders and so many others who gathered with that community, who *entered* that community, who came up alongside those who were suffering – to bear their suffering, to offer whatever companionship they can offer, to offer them human touch, human presence – that's what the church does.

That's who we are. It's who we are called to be. It's who we are sent to be. It's why Jesus came. He said it in the temple that Sabbath day so long ago: "I'm here to set people free. I'm here to move into the lives of those who cannot see. I am here to proclaim release to the captives." And then, we saw him do it. Over and over and over again, Jesus went deep into the suffering of God's people, of all people, especially those whom others were not going to be with. "This is why I came," Jesus said.

By entering their suffering, entering *our* suffering, *our* trauma, *our* sin...by going deep into the ways in which we hurt and harm one another and break and shatter human community...by entering into the depth of it all, going all the way to Hell. And there, right there in the midst of it all, somehow, in the amazing wonder and grace of God that is a mystery beyond my comprehension, new life was born.

Jesus gathered it all up into his very self, into God's own self. Our suffering became God's suffering. And, wonder of wonders, wounded by that suffering himself, Jesus carried it all the way to the cross, entered the depth of death. I don't know exactly what happened during the next couple of days, but I do know this: on the other side of hell, Jesus left it all wrapped in a white linen on the floor of an empty tomb and rose up from the dead to offer new life to the world.

That's what Jesus does and it's what we do because we are Jesus people.

# Hearts • Hands • Voices

July 23-26, 2018 • Valparaiso University

The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran Summer Music, invites you to a four-day skill-strengthening gathering for church musicians, pastors, and lay people at Valparaiso University from Monday, July 23 to Thursday, July 26, 2018.

At the core of the event are four group learning session blocks, each with multiple options. Full session descriptions are available on the ALCM website – [www.alcm.org](http://www.alcm.org). A gifted faculty has been gathered who will lead the group learning sessions as well as a series of shorter Ted-talk-like presentations. They will be available for individual help as well. Registration is open, and inexpensive on-campus housing is still available. Come, join us!



## 2019 ELCA World Hunger Domestic Grants

The application for 2019 ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants is NOW OPEN! Visit [www.elca.org/domestichungergrants](http://www.elca.org/domestichungergrants) to learn more about the grants and how to apply. You are also invited to attend one of 2 webinars that will review the grant priorities and cover the basics of applying. Webinars will be June 19 @ 12 p.m. CDT/1:00 p.m. EDT and July 19 @ 7 p.m. CDT/8:00 p.m. EDT. Instructions for calling in can be found at the [elca.org/domestichungergrants](http://elca.org/domestichungergrants) website.

If your congregation operates or is planning a hunger ministry that is TRANSFORMATIVE, HOLISTIC, and INTEGRATED, check out the web site to see if you might apply for a 3-year cycle award, with a maximum award amount of \$10,000 per year, contingent upon the completion of annual evaluations and fund availability. If you have plans, but are not yet ready to apply for funding, new applications are accepted annually.

For more information, contact the ELCA World Hunger Team at [hunger@ELCA.org](mailto:hunger@ELCA.org)



**Indiana-Kentucky Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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