



Hello!

I thought I would introduce myself properly in this, my first monthly communication as your Vice President of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. So here goes!

I am a lifelong Lutheran and lay person, born and raised (mostly) in the PNW. My dad became a Lutheran pastor when I was nine years old after he graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Iowa. High school was in Port Orchard, WA. I graduated from Pacific Lutheran University where I met my husband, Chris, son of a Lutheran pastor and Missionary to Madagascar. We moved to Los Angeles where I taught high school English and Drama, then English to non-native speakers and eventually became the Yearbook and Newspaper Advisor as well. Moving to LA also meant for the first time, finding a church home that wasn't led by a family member. We landed at a small church in Pasadena that got smaller as we journeyed through a series of church splits. We also spent a year in Madagascar, teaching English to interested Malagasy as volunteers. After starting a family, we returned to the PNW in the Tacoma area and found a church home/community at Mount Cross Lutheran Church in University Place. In 2010, we moved to Holden Village where Chris oversaw the infrastructure projects the Village undertook during Mine Remediation and I served as Program Coordinator. Our daughter, Kasey, and our son, Corey, both graduated from Holden High School. Go Goats! A seven month around the country road trip served as our transition/sabbatical and we loved visiting churches around the country – many, but not all of them, Lutheran. We landed back in the PNW in 2016 and became part of Emmaus Table, one of the synod's new and emerging ministries in the Green Lake neighborhood of Seattle. We also regularly attended Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church while the worshipping community at Emmaus Table formed. I was elected to Synod Council in 2021.

That's my personal journey. I also want you to know some of my core beliefs that will inform my work as Vice President. I believe the world is in desperate need of the Lutheran understanding of grace – that God's love is freely given to all and there is nothing we can do to earn it, or deserve it, or to be excluded from it. In order to continue to have the privilege of sharing this good news, we need to learn new ways of being church, which I believe includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Within our churches
 - More cooperation and collaboration between congregations
 - Listening to and learning from each other
 - Discerning what it is we do well and doing that – not trying to do/be everything
 - Learning what other congregations do well so we can get folks into the place that best fits their needs
 - Nurturing relationships/loving our people
- Within our wider communities
 - Working more outside of the walls of the church than inside
 - Listening to people's stories, learning their hopes and dreams, struggles and challenges
 - Nurturing relationships/loving our people

Another core belief I have is that the church has lay leaders who are as dedicated to God's work as rostered leaders. I want to use my platform as Vice President to lift up the voices of other lay folk in the synod. This monthly missive will be one of the ways I do that. This space will be:

- A place to share the "living word" – where God is working now in the world
- A place to share good news
- A place to be honest about struggles
- A place to learn
- A place to hear about things, big and small, that make a difference
- A place of joy

So, what have you got? If you have a lay folk story to tell, I want to hear it – both to inform the work of the council, and to share your story so others can be inspired by your work. Email me at veep@lutheransnw.org. Let's talk. Really. I want to hear from you. I need a story for October's Lay of the Land in the PNW. Please reach out.

Joyfully,

Cindy Shultz
NW WA Synod Vice President

But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night and day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.

Peter 2:9-10 The Message