



During the Bishop's Sabbatical we are lifting up guest writers from the synod staff. Thank you to our Dir. for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Judy Brennan, our featured writer for **Oct. 2026**



"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19

God IS up to something – what is it?

How do we perceive, recognize, notice whatever "it" is – and then respond?

As both individuals and faith communities, isn't this part of our regular reflection all the time? We know God is active in the world. We know God is continually moving to bring love, grace, healing, and wholeness to a world that desperately needs it. And we believe that as members of God's body, however small we are, we get to be a part of that big "Good News" mission.

The congregations and ministries in our synod are mission centers – where God's beloved people are embraced, inspired, strengthened, and equipped to be participants in God's work in the world. I am humbled to listen as so many people share with me profound stories about how God is working through them – both individually and through their communities of faith. Of course, I don't have enough space here to share with you all these stories, but I will tell you one:

Pastor Wendy Cheung serves as the Mission Developer for two of our Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWCs). One of them, called Jesus Loves Me Lutheran Church, is a unique community serving special needs children, adults, and their families. Pastor Wendy told me:

"There have been many times when I have struggled with this ministry because I know how complex and demanding it is. The greatest challenge is not designing programs. The deeper challenge is how to walk faithfully with children with special needs and with their families.

Children with special needs may experience sudden emotional, behavioral, or sensory challenges, and their parents and caregivers often carry long-term stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and pain. I often ask myself: How can we truly care for these families? How can we accompany them without simply trying to solve their problems? How can we help bring them into the presence of God so that they themselves may receive strength, comfort, and hope from Him?

This ministry requires more than good programs. It requires patience, training, pastoral care, wisdom, and a community willing to learn how to walk together... My hope is that Jesus Loves Me will continue to be a community where these families experience love and belonging, and where they are also empowered to share that love with other families who live with similar realities. I hope it will become a place where every person has meaningful opportunities to participate, serve, and use the gifts God has given them."

God is at work in and through this beautiful ministry – and I am so grateful that this community is part of who we are as people of faith in the Northwest Washington Synod.

I am honored to serve as a connector, supporter, and advocate for all the congregations and ministries throughout our Synod. I am grateful for you, and for all our many mission centers, active in both perceiving and participating in what God is up to in our amazing corner of the world. Let's stay connected!

Your partner in ministry,

Rev. Judy Brennan, Director for Evangelical Mission | Northwest Washington Synod | dem@lutheransnw.org

For more info about congregations and ministries in our synod, please visit our website:

<https://www.lutheransnw.org/pages/congregations-mission-starts-ministry-sites> or invite me to tell you some more stories. **To financially support** Jesus Loves Me and other Emerging and Strategic Ministries of our synod, please donate here (select New & Strategic Ministries in the dropdown menu) <https://www.lutheransnw.org/give>