

The Church Mouse

Vashon Lutheran Church
JULY/AUGUST 2026

This Issue

1. From the Desk of Rev John Michael Barich
2. Message from the Bishop
3. Final Word from the VP
4. Report from Synod Assembly
5. Announcements
6. Our Faith In Action

CONTACT US

Limited Office Hours in July and August

Please Call Ahead – 206-463-2655

VashonLutheran@gmail.com

VashonLutheran.org

Mailing Address: PO BOX 2930 Vashon, WA 98070

Street Address: 18623 Vashon Hwy SW Vashon, WA 98070

Role	Name	Contact
Care Pastor	Rev. John Michael Barich	206-422-1974
Secretary	Marita Ericksen	206-463-2655

VLC COUNCIL MEMBERS	Name	Contact
President	Patte Wagner	206-519-3841 pattewags@aol.com
Vice President	Gail Larson	206-852-4967 gelars4@hotmail.com
Secretary	Martha Gebhard	206-463-1290 MarthaGebhard@gmail.com
Treasurer	Erica Wagner	206-353-0115 erica.marlene@outlook.com
Member at Large	Marita Ericksen	206-715-7126 marita.ericksen@gmail.com
Member at Large	Reidar Dittmann	206-853-4009 Dittmann.reidar@comcast.net
Member at Large	Jack Kirkman	253-820-8737 acumen.llc@comcast.net
	Rev. Jeff Larson PhD	206-567-4779 the-key@hotmail.com

From the desk of Rev. John Michael Barich

Since at least the year 258, June 29 has been a date on which Christians have commemorated the saints Peter and Paul. These two apostles lived out different and separate ministries, but both served, even to their deaths, their one Savior. We gathered this week to thank God for these leaders of the church and to pray for such dedication to Christ in our own lives. The image of believers as lambs and sheep fits with the biblical imagery of God and of Christ as shepherd. The word “pastor” means shepherd. Counter to much in current Christian mentality, here as in many places in the Scriptures, the faith is a communal experience. Even the single lost sheep of Luke’s Gospel account is brought back to the fold.

Luke recounts that the escape of Peter from prison involves an angel. An angel is a messenger of the will and word of God; in the Hebrew Scriptures, angels are understood as extensions of God, as the way that humans can experience God. The tradition of art has not helped in our mental pictures of these perfect beings that in ways mysterious connect us with God. In this story, the angel enacts the will of God: to free Peter from death at this time.

The passage about Paul’s death uses one metaphor after another: the good fight, the race, the crown, the judge, the lion’s mouth, the heavenly kingdom. A metaphor that is less accessible to many comes from pagan religious language: a libation was wine or oil poured out on the ground in offering to a deity at a temple or shrine or during a formal dinner. Christians can imagine their entire lives as libations, goodness poured out for others in praise of God

Peter and Paul are revered as the two most influential leaders of the early Christian church. It is believed that both were martyred in Rome in or shortly after 64 under the persecution of Emperor Nero. The church holds these two together because of their witness to the salvation of Christ Jesus. However, records indicate that they disagreed with each other on important issues. They have come to represent two different expressions of the church, Peter the role of the organization and Paul the spirit of evangelism, Peter maintaining the tradition and Paul stepping toward the future, Peter at the altar, Paul in the pulpit. The church needs them both - we need them both!

Rev. John Michael Barich, Care Pastor

Message from the Bishop

On July 18, 1976 Pastor Nancy Winder was ordained into Word and Sacrament ministry. She was the first woman ordained in what was then the North Pacific District and the fourteenth woman ordained in the American Lutheran Church.

But Nancy and those thirteen women were not the first. We remember all the women who came before them. In scripture we remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Phoebe, Priscilla, Junea, Lydia, and all the unnamed women including the Samaritan woman at the well who ran to proclaim what she had seen and heard, becoming the first to declare Jesus as Lord.

Along with these women in scripture, we also remember the countless women in these last 2000 years – Hildegard, Katie Luther, Argula von Grumbach, Maria Stewart, Phoebe Palmer, Catherine Booth, Margaret Wold, and so many others who were called by the Holy Spirit to preach, teach, proclaim, lead, and serve. We give thanks for the myriad of gifts that God has poured out through women for the sake of the church and the life of the world.

I am so thankful for the many women in our lives who passed on their faith to us. The women who taught Sunday School, prepared the altar, made meals, visited those who were sick, and marched against injustice. The women theologians, mystics, and writers. The women who, in countless ways, proclaimed through word and deed the good news of Jesus.

Thank you to our sisters in Christ. Thank you for the ways you have lived out your faith in every vocation. Thank you to the women who have gone before us, to the women serving today, and to the women who continue to say yes to God's call including those called into ordained ministry. I wonder, do you remember the first time you heard a woman preach? The first time you heard an alto or soprano voice chanting the liturgy or saying the words of institution? I remember. I was twenty years old. Seeing and hearing someone who looked like me, who had a body like mine, made the gospel come alive in a way I hadn't experienced before. Truly, it changed my life.

This is why I grieve what is happening to some of our sisters in other denominations. In recent weeks, the Southern Baptist Convention voted at its annual assembly to further restrict women from teaching, preaching, and pastoral leadership. This means women ordained ten or twenty or fifty years ago may now find their callings denied by the very churches they have faithfully served. So many women – chosen, loved, called, sent women with fire in their bellies to preach the gospel may no longer do so. Not by God, but by their denomination. Their silencing is not only a tragedy for them; it is a tragedy for the whole Church.

So today there is an urgency to remember, celebrate, and publicly proclaim, that women are called by God. Just as the Spirit came to Mary, who sang of the mighty brought down from their thrones, just as the Spirit sent Mary Magdalene to proclaim resurrection to the apostles, just as Lydia helped birth a community of believers, the Spirit has called and continues to call women in every age.

So, in joy, thankfulness, and celebration, let us give thanks for the women of the past, present, and future who continue to proclaim, teach, lead, and serve. For, as we read in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, *"Since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart ... For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord."*

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee | bishop@lutheransnw.org

FINAL Word from VEEP Kay:

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. (Isaiah 50:4)

I am a word person. I have always had an appreciation for the power of prose, the beauty of poetry, and the wisdom of *the* Word. Both of my degrees are in English and I spent thirty-seven years as a Language Arts teacher. God gave me the tongue of a teacher so I could sustain the weary with a word. So, early in my first term as synod vice president, when I was asked if I wanted to write a monthly article for “The Spirit,” I happily agreed.

At first, my hope was to use the space to share more information about the role of the synod council. I knew from personal experience that the average “person in the pew” didn’t really know much about the other two expressions of the church. Therefore, the first few submissions were heavy in language from our governing documents about the responsibilities of the vice president and the rest of the council. I shared about our meetings and what I and the other council members had been up to in the month. These were informational, but not exactly “sustaining the weary” words.

As time went on, circumstances changed. We entered into an unprecedented global pandemic that upended so much of what we believed about what community and church were. We learned new ways of being neighbors at appropriately social distance and new ways of doing and being church. As synod leadership scrambled to support and assist our congregations, it became apparent that weariness was a definite challenge. My articles began to focus on scripture and a layperson’s understanding of what God was doing in the world. Every day when I took my “I just need to get out of this darn house” walk, I prayed for the words to sustain the weary. I hope those articles were uplifting and strengthening in very troubling times.

Eventually, we emerged from the pandemic shutdown, but I continued to use the space to reflect on scripture. I’m not a deacon nor a pastor. I’m not a trained theologian. My ponderings are those of a layperson. I hoped that the things I was curious about or the little epiphanies I had would also resonate with others. Interestingly, although the bishop and I never discussed what we would be writing about, our articles almost always seemed like we’d coordinated them. It seems that “The Spirit” is truly Spirit-inspired.

In this final article, I want to share what an honor it has been to serve as your synod vice president over the past eight years. As tough as leading during the pandemic and the current political turmoil has been, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many wonderful people, not only throughout the synod, but the entire ELCA. I have had the joy of representing the synod at call meetings and of attending ordinations and installations of rostered ministers. I have been an active participant and leader in the Association of Synod Vice Presidents and I have represented the synod at three Churchwide Assemblies. Mostly, though, I have worked with the bishop, our amazing synod staff, and all the faithful and wise members of synod council to act on behalf of all the individuals, congregations, worshipping communities, and outreach ministries striving to be God’s presence here in the NWWA Synod.

Thank you to all who have supported me these past eight years. I commend to you our new Vice President, Cindy Shultz, whose term begins August 1. I know she will be a great partner in this work. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as vice president.

Blessings and peace to you all!

Kay Edgerton, Vice President of the NW Washington Synod | veep@lutheransnw.org

REPORT FROM THE NW WA SYNOD ELCA

GATHERING MAY 30, 2026

The theme of this year's synod gathering, "Life in God's Garden: Seeds of Generosity", was the message of the day, from the opening worship service, to the inspirational message by keynote speaker, Rev. Tim Brown (Director of Congregational Stewardship, ELCA), to the themes of the workshop sessions (i. e., "Bloom and Grow Together", "Greening Our Churches", "Sowing Seeds in Housing Ministry", "Cultivating a Year-Round Stewardship Plan", and "Tending the Soil of Congregational Trust".), to Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee's final dismissal at the end of the closing worship: "Go in peace. Grow in God's Garden!" And we all responded: "Thanks be to God!"

For me, Rev. Tim Brown's keynote speech and activities he created with us and opening/closing worship were the two highlights. We opened the day, gathered in the Lynnwood Trinity Lutheran Church's sanctuary. There were 240 people, singing hymns from the "All Creation Sings" hymnal, aptly led by Trinity's Music Director David Horton. We listened to scriptures, played and prayed together. Bishop Shelley read the Gospel, Matt. 13:31-32: "He put forth another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.' " This scripture was the focus of her sermon and of the keynote speaker's message. Rev. Tim Brown asked, "How are you living in God's garden?" "What do we lift up in this world?" He spoke of the "goodness of service", stating that "your generosity of time and money makes you a more joyful human."

In the middle of the day, with the help of Assist. Bishop Andy Yee, I retrieved from my car two large bags of toiletry items Patte put together to take to the gathering as VLC's offering to the El Camino de Emaus Toiletry Pantry. A literal mountain of toiletries grew in the narthex of the church from all of the participating churches' donations! Below is a message gathering organizer, Susan Berg, sent on June 1 to the NW WA Synod, ELCA:

"What a joy to be with those in attendance - 240 of us! THANK YOU for your generous offering for Lutheran Disaster Response and the El Camino de Emaus Toiletries Pantry! THANK YOU to the staff and congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church and Schools for their hospitality and leadership behind the scenes. THANK YOU to our workshop leaders, volunteers, and keynote presenter, Tim Brown. Indeed - it is good to be together in God's Garden of love, joy, peace and generosity!"

I highly recommend people of VLC think about attending the next NW WA Synod Assembly or Gathering. It was wonderful to meet new people and to reacquaint myself with old friends gathered at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood!

With Gratitude,

Marita Ericksen, VLC Representative to the 2026 NW WA Synod Gathering

Announcements

All are invited to Edna Dam's celebration of life and Jim Dam's 90 th birthday garden party, Sunday, July 12, at the Dam's home, from 1–6 pm. Address is: 14035 – 107 th Way SW, Vashon, WA 98070.

Contact Gail Larson (206/852-4967) with your prayer requests.

IFCH Dinner Program - VLC will provide a meal at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM the fourth Thursday of the month. Contact Cheryl Weise: cheryl.weise@gmail.com.

The Care Closet, Medical Equipment/Supplies – 206-473-8715. Vashon Care Network – 206-473-8715. Email: contact@vashoncarenetwork.org; website: www.vashoncarenetwork.org.

VCN FAMILY CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP - Vashon Care Network invites you to join other caregivers, Thurs., 6:30–7:30 PM at VLC. Call Tory Hayes, 206-304-4544, victoriansmith@comcast.net.





Our Faith In Action

SUNDAY

1st

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM

10:30 AM

6:30 – 8:30 PM

July 12, 1:00 – 6:00 PM Jim's 90th BD&Edna's Celebration of Life at the Dam's home

July 19 & 26, 2:30 – 5:30 PM

Food Bank Sunday

Bible Study in Fellowship Hall

Worship Service

AA Group

VCN Home Health Care Aides Training

MONDAY

June 13th, 9:30AM-3:30PM VCA Youth Musical Theatre-High School Musical JR.

July 20, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

July 20, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

TUESDAY

2nd, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

3rd, 10:00 AM – noon

Quilt Sewers Group

Vashon Quilting Group

WEDNESDAY

1st, 9:00 AM – noon

July 22, 1:00 – 5:00 PM

July 29, noon – 1:00 PM

Lutheran Quilters Group

Tom & Molly Anderson 30th Anniversary Reception

VLC Council Meeting in Pastor's Office

THURSDAY

10:00 AM

July 23, 5:00 PM

6:30-7:30 PM

Intercessory Prayer Group in Pastor's Office

IFCH dinner served at Vashon Presbyterian Ch.

VCN Family Caregivers Support Group at VLC

FRIDAY

7:00 – 8:30 PM

AA Group for Men

SATURDAY

July 18 & 25, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

VCN Home Health Care Aides Training

About us

Vashon Lutheran Church

PO Box 2930

Address: 18623 Vashon Hwy SW

Church Office Hours - Limited Hours in July and
August

Please Call Ahead

Phone: 206-463-2655

Contact us: VashonLutheran@gmail.com

VashonLutheran.Org

The Church Mouse/Vashon Lutheran Church

18623 Vashon Hwy SW

Mailing: PO Box 2930

Vashon, WA 98070

Email: VashonLutheran@gmail.com

JULY/AUGUST 2026

