

# The Church Mouse

VASHON LUTHERAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER  
2025

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## this issue

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From **The Spirit**, a publication of the **Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA**

### "WELL, IT COULD BE WORSE!"

Sometimes, that's how *SOME* Lutheran Christians downplay the losses in their lives (family member, memory, mobility, health, employment...). This may provide temporary relief at best. Any loss can cause pain, feelings of confusion, and uncertainty. These responses are normal and our church is here to embrace community members with the love of God, always. One way we do, is by beginning November with the bittersweet celebration of All Saints, when we recall our friends and loved ones who have died in Christ. As we celebrate their lives of faith, we also pause to grieve their absence. The rich texts of scripture and hymnody throughout the month allow the gathered body of Christ to express both our joy and our lament as we reflect on the passage from death into life.

As we journey together, coping with loss and grief, healthy and necessary pieces of our response may include crying, ruminating, napping, shouting, and yes, even laughing. It's also important to talk to someone you trust. Available people can include a partner, spouse, parent, relative, friend, trained counselor, a pet, and a pastor. For the next couple of months I will be serving as your Care Pastor again and will be here to accompany you and work alongside you as we proclaim and live into these words from 2 Corinthians 1.3-7: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God."

Peace of Christ,

Rev. John Michael Barich

m 206.422.1974

## From the BISHOP:

Dear Beloveds,

Across our country, people are struggling – financially, emotionally, spiritually. Division, violence, and uncertainty are paramount. We are living in a time when the weight of the world feels heavier than most of us can bear. Families are being torn apart, communities are threatened, and political leaders are trading compassion for power. Every day seems more chaotic and unmoored than the day before. For many, fear has become a daily companion. We might cry, along with the psalmist in Psalm 13, *“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?”*

[Pause here. For we must acknowledge the pain that is happening within us and around us. Pause. This might be a long, long pause.] ... Now let us take a deep breath. Now let us move forward.

After we have named the deep wounds within us and across this nation; after we have confessed our grief, our weariness, and our complicity in the broken systems that bind us; after we have allowed the truth to settle in, let us remember that this is not the end of the story. As people of faith, we don't stop at despair and fear. We don't close our eyes or turn inward or try to protect ourselves from more pain. No. Instead we open our eyes, turn outward, and we rise to follow Jesus once more – into the very places and spaces where pain still lingers and where love is most needed.

How do we do this? As people saved by grace through Jesus, how do look outward and love our neighbor? Here are some ideas from a letter (<https://www.lutheransnw.org/news/letter-from-elca-bishops>) signed by many of the bishops that was published in October 2025. These ideas include:

- Pray for those who are vulnerable and for all who work for justice.
- Advocate in your communities, legislatures, and Congress for laws that protect migrants, advance racial justice, and safeguard LGBTQIA+ people.
- Engage in the holy work of hospitality, creating spaces of safety, affirmation, and belonging for all of God's children.
- Model respectful dialogue in a polarized world, seeking understanding rooted in love.
- Hold fast to hope, trusting that the Spirit is still at work renewing creation and reconciling the world to God.

As a guide to this holy work, I have always loved the story of Martin Luther who, when the plague was raging in Wittenberg, chose to stay in order to care for the sick and comfort the dying. We might sometimes think of Luther as curmudgeonly and argumentative. We might also think he was more concerned with being saved by grace through faith than loving his neighbor. But Luther's courage and pastoral care during the plague shows his heart and his response to God's amazing grace. For during the plague, as people were dying around him, he stayed and cared and ministered. In 1527 he wrote, *“We are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped.”* (*“Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague”*)

Above all things, let us not grow weary. Let us continue to hear the summons of Jesus. Let us continue to answer the call to love our neighbor – especially the most vulnerable. And, may we be the ones who, in a weary world, hope as the psalmist hopes at the end of Psalm 13: *“But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because God has dealt bountifully with me.”*

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you, Rev. John Michael Barich, for participating in worship today!

Sunday Bible study group today, Nov. 9, 9:45 – 10:15 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

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

IFCH Dinner Program - VLC will not provide a hand out meal at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM the fourth Thurs. of November (Thanksgiving). The meals will resume in December. Contact Cheryl Weise: [cheryl.weise@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.weise@gmail.com).

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

VCN FAMILY CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP - Vashon Care Network invites you to join other family caregivers in a safe, supportive space to share the experience of caregiving. Thursdays, 6:30–7:30 PM at VLC. ?? Call Tory Hayes, 206.304-4544, [victoriansmith@comcast.net](mailto:victoriansmith@comcast.net).

The Vashon Old Friends Club will officially open at the Presbyterian Church, Wednesday, Sept. 17. The Club, a place of fun & friendship for adults with memory loss or cognitive change, provides breaks for their caregivers. It's offered every Weds., 9:30 am– 2:30 pm. If you're a caregiver or know someone with cognitive challenges & have questions, please submit a Program Interest Form, available on the VCN website: [www.vashoncarenetwork.org](http://www.vashoncarenetwork.org). If you want to volunteer, contact: [laurettahyde721@gmail.com](mailto:laurettahyde721@gmail.com).

## Our Faith In Action

### SUNDAY

1 <sup>st</sup>	Food Bank Sunday
9:45 AM – 10:15 AM	Bible Study w/Roger Gebhard
10:30 AM	Worship Service
6:30 – 8:30 PM	AA Group
Nov. 16, 11:45 AM	VLC Council Meeting, in Pastor's Office
Nov. 16, 1:00 PM	Bridgit Webb – Inclusive Islanders Event

### TUESDAY

2 <sup>nd</sup> , 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Quilt Sewers Group
3 <sup>rd</sup> , 10:00 AM – noon	Vashon Quilting Group
Nov. 25, 4:15-6:15 PM	VCA Youth Musical Theatre Rehearsal

### WEDNESDAY

1 <sup>st</sup> , 9:00 AM – noon	Lutheran Quilters Group
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### THURSDAY

6:30-7:30 PM	VCN Family Caregivers Support Group at VLC
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### FRIDAY

7:00 – 8:30 PM	AA Group for Men
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### SATURDAY

Nov. 15, 10 AM – 1:00 PM	Caregiver Training, in the Fellowship Hall
Nov. 15, 10 AM – noon	Vashon Chorale, Sop. Sectional in Sanctuary



## VASHON LUTHERAN CHURCH

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