

The VISTA *lite*

DWELLING IN...

*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19a*

As we approach Lent this year, I am reminded that "fasting" has a long tradition in history. It has two meanings. The most popular definition is to "give something up" for Lent, whether that be chocolate or Facebook. The other is not as well-known but is about "holding fast" to something, like your prayer discipline or family life.

In our Synod's communication, we are giving up and holding fast beginning in February, and there will be a "new thing." After 165 years of printed synod news, last month was the last edition of the Vista newspaper. It was difficult to give up this historical, printed Vista mailed to members homes, but costs kept increasing and the editor, John Dellis, couldn't continue due to demands at his new job at the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest (Thanks, John, for your years of service!)



However, we wanted to hold fast to keeping good communication within the synod, so "more frequent communication at less cost" seemed the wisest way of making this change.

Therefore, VISTAlite was born, a monthly insert for congregational newsletters that provides an opportunity for celebrating some events and anticipating others. Pastor Julie Rowe, the synod's Communications Coordinator, will be the editor.

This communication tool complements the weekly eNews that provides shorter-term updates on events and happenings. Anyone can register for eNews by going to the synod website at www.swtsynod.org and clicking on the eNews icon on the bottom right of that page.

As for Lent, I have until Ash Wednesday, Feb 14, to decide if I will give something up, hold fast to something or do both. Since Ash Wednesday will be Valentine's Day. I doubt I will be giving up chocolate!

Peace, Bishop Ray Tiemann



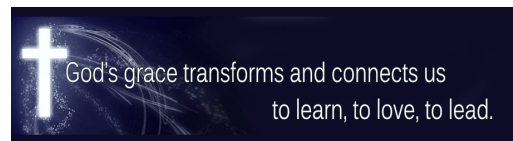
LEGACIES BRING NEW LIFE

Several congregations have closed their doors, but their ministries live on in the new life growing in other congregations.

Part of the legacy of Prince of Peace, San Antonio, lives on in Gethsemane and Jesus Maestro Mission in San Antonio. Pastor Eric Miletti says this gift has made possible strong new outreach ministries with a diverse and underserved neighborhood.

St Andrew's ministry continues in Shepherd King, San Antonio. Pastor Kris Franke Hill says the well-developed, faithful leaders are a great gift already contributing to the church's mission.

See more on [Faithful Legacy Closings](#) on the Synod website.



THE FEEDING OF THE 2500 AT ST MARK, ADKINS

The feast is over and the BBQ pits cooled, but the inspiration and lessons learned from St Mark's benefit BBQ for the shooting incident at Sutherland Springs are there for the taking. This small church ignited 2500 people to attend and over 11,000 interested on Facebook to donate over \$90,000 for the cause. Why and how?

The Spirit ignited a spark in young people with a fledgling BBQ ministry—and other members of St. Mark. It caught fire with the dedication of community young people who wanted to make a difference. 500 people responded to volunteer—working 7 days straight with BBQ pits from as far away as Louisiana to serve 700 lbs of meat that day. We can fuel our mission by reaching out to the people and gifts already in our communities through partnerships to touch a heartfelt need!



LUTHERAN LEGISLATIVE EVENT: LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR THROUGH ADVOCACY

This year's 2018 Lutheran Legislative Event is sponsored by the SWT Synod's Poverty and Justice Task Force (PJTF) in partnership with Texas Impact. The theme is "Rooted in Faith/Grounded in Love," based on Ephesians 3:14-21. The event will be held at Gethsemane Lutheran, Austin. The event opens at 2:00 pm on Sunday, Feb 11, and concludes at the Texas State Capitol about 1 pm on Tuesday, Feb 13.

This year's agenda focuses on the biblical and theological mandates for justice in legislation, to "act justly and love mercy." Rev. Alexia Salvatierra, an ordained ELCA pastor who trains people throughout the US in the principles and methods of faith-rooted organizing, will provide the inspiration throughout Sunday afternoon/evening.

Texas Impact and John B. Johnson from the ELCA Washington D.C. Advocacy Office will lead Monday's program on advocacy and preparing for visiting legislators, which takes place Tuesday.

Online registration is open at www.swtsynod.org/synodevents.

IMPORTANT FEBRUARY CONFERENCE MEETINGS

Throughout February the eight conferences of the synod will be having special meetings. Along with conference business, there will be a presentation on behalf of the Strategic Planning Task Force about the synod's new Purpose Statement: God's grace transforms and connects us to learn, to love, to lead! There will also be a report on "Congregations Cooperating Together" and everyone will be encouraged to identify nominees for various elections - Ministry Team chairs for the Mission Team and the Leadership Development Team, Synod Council, 2019 Churchwide Assembly voting members, Discipline and Consultation Committees, and two nominees for the ELCA Church Council.

One particularly significant item is the pre-identification process for potential nominees for the bishop's election at the Synod Assembly on May 5-6. All members of a congregation of that conference may take part in this process. The goal of this process is to lift-up names of pastors who may have the gifts to serve as the next bishop of the synod. As each conference completes this process, the Elections Committee will contact all those named and ask if they would like to submit a photo and bio for the assembly website. Voting members to the assembly can then read that information in order to be better informed as they attend the assembly and go through the ecclesiastical ballot for the bishop's election. For the date and location of each conference meeting, ask your pastor or go to <http://www.swtsynod.org/assembly2018>

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS

Feb 3	Equipping the Saints	St Mark, Cuero
Feb 3	Senior Fest	Christ, Georgetown
Feb 5-7	Ignite the Church Conference	Orlando, Florida
Feb 9-11	Remix: A Modern Reformation HS Gathering	Camp Chrysalis
Feb 11-13	Lutheran Legislative Event	Austin
Feb 16-18	Racial Justice and the Church	Mustang Island
Feb 25	Bold Women's Sunday	WELCA