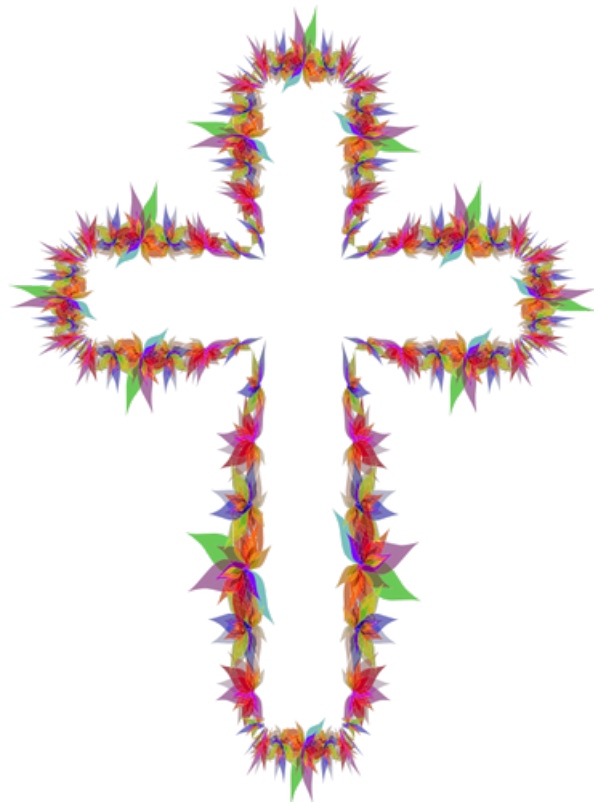


The Church Mouse/Vashon Lutheran Church
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July/August 2024



The Church Mouse

From the desk of Pr. John Michael Barich

I keep *Yahweh* before me always,
 for with him at my *right* hand, nothing can shake me.
 So my heart rejoices, my *soul* delights,
 my body too *will* rest secure,
 for you *will* not abandon me to Sheol,
 you cannot allow your faithful servant to
 see the abyss.
 You *will* teach me the path of life,
 unbounded joy in your presence, at your *right* hand
 delight forever. **Psalm 16.8–11**

The iconic and internationally acclaimed author, Haruki Murakami, gave up living abroad and returned to Japan to face his country's grief resulting from the natural disaster of the Hanshin earthquake in January of 1995 and the domestic terrorism of the Subway Sarin Incident just a couple of months later in Tokyo. Out of this experience he wrote six short stories collected in the book, *After the Quake*. The following is an excerpt from one entitled, *Landscape with Flatiron*:

"I've never once thought about how I was going to die," Junko said. "I *can't* think about it. I don't even know how I'm going to *live*."

Miyake gave a nod. "I know what you mean," he said. "But there's such a thing as a way of living that's guided by the way a person's going to die."

"Is that how you're living?" she asked.

"I'm not sure. It seems that way sometimes."

It seems that's the way the psalmist is living – at peace, assured, composed, even hopeful and joyful when considering the reality of dying with Yahweh right alongside all the way. Fear of the grave is conspicuous by its absence – there is no asserting the absurd notion that God will forever spare us from death. Rather, death leads us all into life, life in the nearer presence of God.

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In the Hebrew scripture the word *Sheol* is a rare occurrence (fewer than 70 times) in contrast to the words used for *die* and *death* (1000 times). *Sheol* reflects the struggle against the powerful and malignant forces that negate life and deprive it of meaning and certainly there are times when we feel life really is the pits and that God is not with us. But the bigger reality this psalm proclaims is that our present circumstances and impending deaths do not negate God's evident and abundant favor. We die with lives fulfilled and will face no future terrors or miseries whatsoever. Now, be guided by *that* view of death and live in such a way that your life gives meaning, hope, and dignity to the people around you who may need to hear this desperately.

Soar now where Christ has led,
following our exalted Head;
made like him, like him we rise;
ours the cross, the grave, the skies! Amen
Charles Wesley, 18th century

Rev. John Michael Barich

From the Bishop:

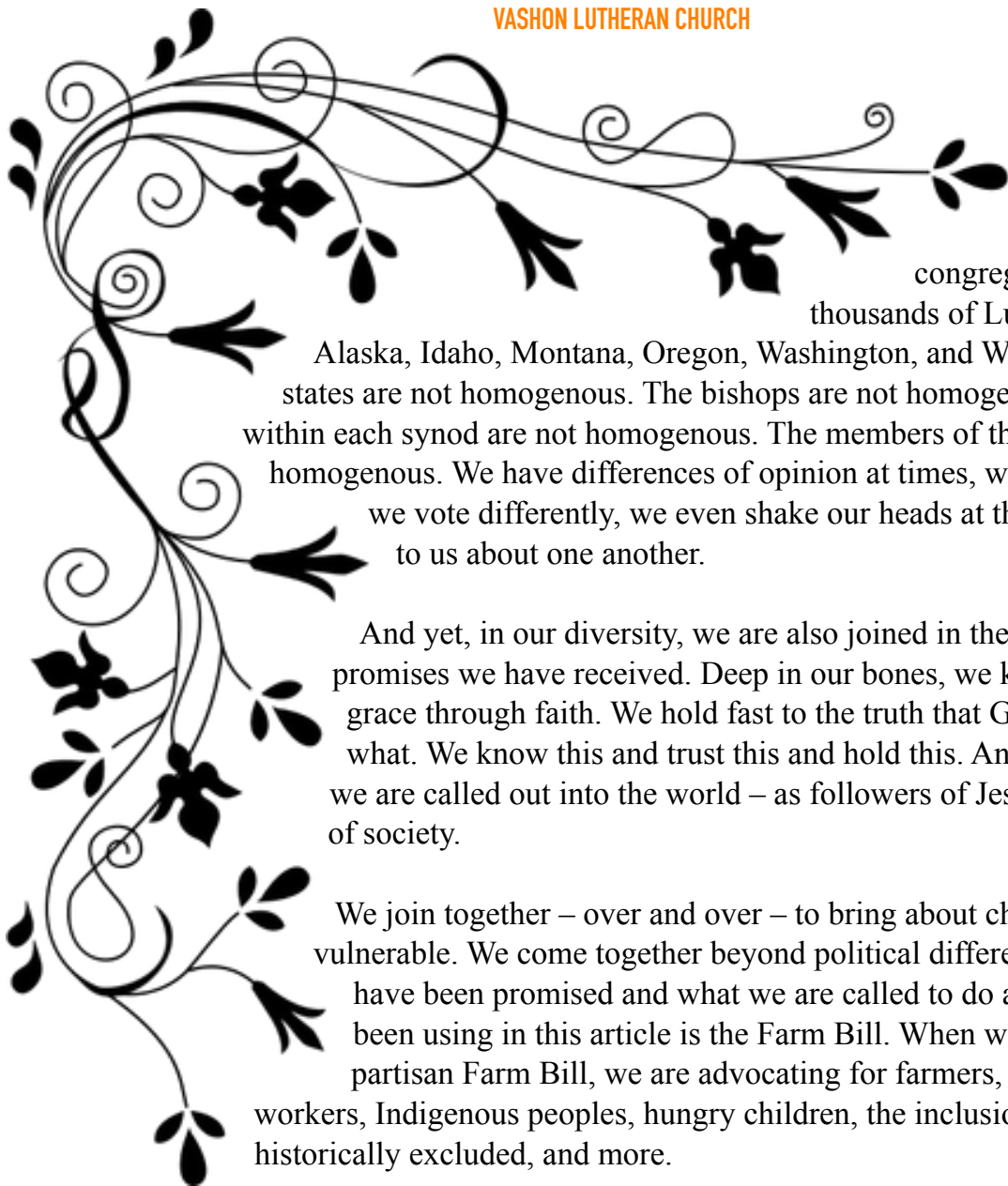


Martin Luther writes in the Small Catechism:

What then does 'daily bread' mean? Everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, field, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. (Small Catechism, Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer)

In May, the six bishops of Region One (this includes the synods of Northwest Washington, Southwestern Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Northwest Intermountain, and Montana) were asked by the Region One hunger teams to write a joint letter requesting Congress to re-authorize the federal Farm Bill and to not cut important funding. The six bishops agreed to write this letter. After it was written and signed, the ELCA Advocacy staff in Washington, DC hand-delivered it to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees' leaderships and to the Representatives in each of the synod's respective states.

In June, there was a zoom event for all the Lutherans in the six synods to learn more about the Farm Bill and advocate for its continuation. This event was sponsored by the Region One hunger ministry teams, ELCA Advocacy, and Faith Action Network (FAN). Different speakers shared information, conversation happened, and the opportunity to write letters to legislators occurred.



As you might know, the six synods have over 560 congregations and tens of

thousands of Lutherans from the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. These synods and states are not homogenous. The bishops are not homogenous. The congregations within each synod are not homogenous. The members of these congregations are not homogenous. We have differences of opinion at times, we have different priorities, we vote differently, we even shake our heads at things that don't make sense to us about one another.

And yet, in our diversity, we are also joined in the unity of Christ and the promises we have received. Deep in our bones, we know that we are saved by grace through faith. We hold fast to the truth that God loves us no matter what. We know this and trust this and hold this. And, because of this, together we are called out into the world – as followers of Jesus and as civic members of society.

We join together – over and over – to bring about change and protect the vulnerable. We come together beyond political difference because of what we have been promised and what we are called to do and to be. The example I've been using in this article is the Farm Bill. When we advocate for this bipartisan Farm Bill, we are advocating for farmers, migrants, agricultural workers, Indigenous peoples, hungry children, the inclusion of those who have been historically excluded, and more.

But, of course, we come together far beyond this Farm Bill. We come together because God calls us to love others as God loves us. We work together for a just society. As German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behavior. Christians are called to compassion and action, not in the first place by their own sufferings, but by the sufferings of their brothers and sisters, for whose sake Christ suffered." (*A Testament to Freedom*)

I am thankful and proud to be Lutheran because of all of you who feed and clothe, nourish and shelter, love and protect those who are the most vulnerable in this country and this world. It would take pages to list all the ways that you do this individually, in your congregations, in the synod, and in the wider church. Thank you for your advocacy and your care. There is, of course, more work to be done. And so let us together work towards the day when all may receive "daily bread."

If you would like to read the Bishops' letter you may click this link: <https://fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Region-1-Bishops-Joint-Letter-Agriculture-Committee-Leaderships.pdf>

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org

VLC LADIES' TEA, JULY 24 AT 2:00 PM



Below is an Invitation from June Langland:

On Wednesday, July 24th we are planning a “Ladies Tea” that will be only a social affair. We will meet at Vashon Lutheran Church at 2 PM. We ask that you bring your own tea cup (tea is not the best in paper cups) and a small plate of finger food - either sweet or savory. You don't have to make a reservation but if you see Patte or myself, you could tell us yes or no. Having no idea of how many will attend, we want to be sure that we set enough places.

If you have any questions, please give me a call. Hope to see all of you on the 24th.

**June Langland
206-463-5850**

CHURCH PICNIC AT THE KOCH'S

We plan to gather between 4 and 5 pm on Sunday August 18th and eat around 5:30 pm. All are welcome.

Gary and I will provide main dishes. We welcome potluck additions, but only as the spirit moves you.

Beverages to share are also welcome.

We have plates, tableware, glasses and cups.

Hope to see you there.

Marlee and Gary Koch

206-409-7744

6340 SW Luana Beach Road.

We will give out directions and mark the turn with a giant fabric lily at the top of our drive.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you, Rev. John Michael Barich for your participation in worship today at VLC!
Sunday AM Bible Study, 9:45 – 10:15 AM, is led by Rev. John Michael Barich. All are welcome.**

NO WORSHIP AT VLC, SUNDAY, JULY 21, DUE TO STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL & CAR PARADE.

Ladies Tea, Weds., July 24th, 2:00 PM – at Vashon Lutheran - Please bring a tea cup and a small plate of either sweet or savory finger food. Please let either Patte Wagner or June Langland know you are coming, so there will be enough places set. If you have questions, please call June at 206-463-5850.

Contact Gail Larson (206/567-4779) with your prayer requests.

IFCH Dinner Program - VLC provides hand out meals at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM the fourth Thurs. of the month. Contact Chery Weise: cheryl.weise@gmail.com to help.

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 family caregivers in a safe, supportive space to share the experience of caregiving. Thursdays, 6:30–7:30 PM at VLC. ?? Call Kathy Shafel, kshafel@comcast.net, cell: 206.718-1458 or Tory Hayes, 206.304-4544, victoriansmith@comcast.net.

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.”
Ephesians 1

OUR FAITH IN ACTION

SUNDAY

1st, Food Bank Sunday

9:45 – 10:15 AM Bible Study w/ Rev. John Michael Barich

10:30 AM Worship Service, followed by coffee & cookies

6:30 – 8:30 PM AA Group

MONDAY

10:00 AM Intercessory Prayer Group

4th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM VCN Board Meeting

TUESDAY

2nd, 9:00 – 1:00 PM Quilt Sewers Group

3rd, 10:00 – noon Vashon Quilting Group

August 13, 5:00 PM PM, VLC ZOOM Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY

1st, 9:00 AM – noon Lutheran Quilters Group

July 24, 2:00 PM Ladies Tea at VLC

THURSDAY

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

July 25, 5:00 pm IFCH Dinner prepared by VLC, served at VPC

FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:30 PM AA Group for Men



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