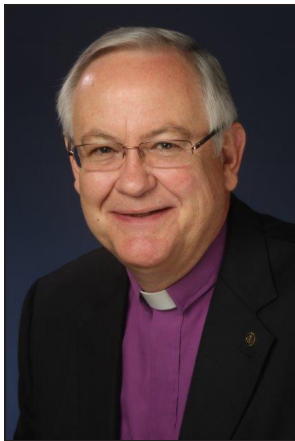


The Spirit

The Gift of Seeing by the Rev. Kirby Unti, Bishop



I grew up like many children around the world hearing about the man in the moon. I had no idea what the phrase actually referred to until one night when I was riding in the back seat of my parent's car staring out at the moon and the stars. Suddenly the image of the man's face in moon came into focus. I shouted out as if I was the first to

discover it. "Look, the man in the moon!"

It was no great revelation to the rest of the family but for me it was a major find. In fact I felt funny, stupid for not having seen it long before. Now when I look up at this great celestial light I see the man immediately.

How could it be that for the first years of my childhood I never saw the man? And how is it that my brothers spotted him long before I did? All I saw was the moon with its contrasting shadows. And how is it that once an image comes into focus we see it almost instantly on each sighting?

Insight, awareness, vision, seeing are all essential to being people of faith.

Being late in life to see the man in the moon has created for me a sense of humility. I know that I am slow in many other areas of my life to see that which is obvious to others.

I am slow to see so much of the injustice that takes place in life. I am even slower to see the part I play in it.

I am slow to see and understand how others see the world much differently than I do.

I am slow to realize how my actions and attitude hurt others.

I am slow to realize how abundant the gifts are that God rains down on my life.

I am slow to see how gracious God is.

How is it possible that I do not see what is so obvious?

Friends, this is why the words of the confession speak loudly in my ears with such truth. The confession helps me understand why it is that I am so slow to see. The confession causes me to put all my eggs in the basket of grace. It is my only hope.

I thank you for your patience when I shout out my latest insight as if I were the first to discover it.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

-- *Philippians 1:9-10*

P.S. There was a full moon the night my father died. The little kid in me felt as if the man in the moon was my father smiling down on me.

**Thank you to the MANY volunteers
who helped to make the 2014 Synod Assembly run smoothly!**

2014 Synod Assembly – Highlights

The 2014 Assembly of the Northwest Washington Synod was held May 16 - 17, 2014 in Everett, WA. Bishop Kirby Unti presided over his first assembly with the theme “Joining God’s Parade.”

Special guests:

Pastor Linda Norman, ELCA Treasurer, shared a report from the Churchwide expression, shared in a Q & A time and preached at our final worship service. Dr. Tony Jones, our keynote speaker, challenged us to consider how the changes in culture have both affected the current status and the future of “the church.”

We welcomed 32 Ministry Partner Organizations and Synod Committees to our Display area. During breaks the room was filled with conversations and information-sharing. The Spokane - Based Book Parlor offered a variety of books for sale. We encouraged more connection-making at a music & fellowship time on Friday afternoon, offering appetizers and no-host beverages.

We celebrated the 125th Anniversary of Kent Lutheran Church; the 50th Anniversary of Cross of Christ, Bellevue and the 75th Anniversary of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

We thanked the retiring Roberta Nestaas for her 30+ years of service with Lutheran Community Services of the NW.

Four resolutions were presented and all were approved. (Full text of the resolutions can be found on the website: www.lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly-2014)

- Super Bowl Sunday Hunger Awareness Day
- Maritime Ministry
- ELCA Campaign
- Endorsement of Initiative I-594: Background Checks

Assembly Offerings

A total of \$5,000 which will be split:

- 20% for ELCA Companion Synods,
- 40% Lutherans Restoring Creation, and
- 40% Lutheran Good Gifts – Microloans.

Budget:

We approved the 2015 Budget cap (\$1,480,500) and the 2015 Budget Proposal (\$1,480,428.50).

Throughout the Assembly, we shared a dozen brief 1-3 minute video presentations from a number of our Ministry Partners. These brought to life the many ways we are joining God’s parade in our neighborhoods.

Election Results:

•**Synod Vice President:** Georganne Robertson (Queen Anne, Seattle)

•**Synod Secretary:** Pastor Deanna Wildermuth (Holy Trinity, Mercer Island)

•Synod Council Members:

Emily Brown (First, Richmond Beach, Shoreline)

Franklin Chu (Bethany, Bainbridge Island)

James Colver (Holy Spirit, Kirkland)

Pastor Kristy Daniels (Church of Steadfast Love, Seattle)

Pastor Eric Finsand (Christ the Servant, Bellingham)

Pastor Julie Hutson (Luther Memorial, Seattle)

Kristina Muramoto (Magnolia, Seattle)

Anita Proudfoot (Gethsemane, Seattle)

Sojin Thompson (St. Matthew, Renton)

Thor Wampler (First, Bothell)

Paul Whitfield (Magnolia, Seattle)

We gathered together in worship three times: a more traditional opening communion service, with Bishop Unti preaching, voices offering prayers from the congregation and the Trinity Lutheran College Choir; a matins service, reminding of our baptisms; a thanksgiving service with jazzed up familiar hymns, Pastor Linda Norman preaching, and lifting up 34 sisters and brothers who are celebrating 25 – 60 years of ordained or consecrated ministry.

Finally, with the words of the “Closing of the Assembly,” we were sent - to Join in God’s Parade!

The Spirit, a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is intended for members, leaders, and clergy of synod congregations and organizations. Congregations are encouraged to copy ***The Spirit*** and include it in their own newsletters. ***The Spirit*** can be downloaded from the Synod website.

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