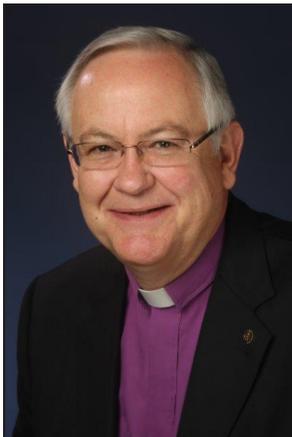


The Spirit

An Invitation To Deepen Our Companion Relationship by the Rev. Kirby Unti, Bishop



The Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia is our Companion Synod and they are calling upon the churches of the Northwest Washington Synod to hold them up in prayer. I have learned when our global partners ask for our prayers or offer to pray for us they really mean it.

Our sisters and brothers find themselves caught right in middle of what is going on between Russia and the Western world. This places them in a terrible bind because they are seen as a “Western” entity. Their deep desire is for their country to desist from playing geopolitical games.

In a recent letter from +Bishop Dietrich Brauer he says, “In these hard times we ask you dear sisters and brothers, to keep and strengthen our partnership and solidarity, continue to pray for a good, peaceful and free future for Russia and Ukraine, pray, that God gives us courage to be witnesses of His justice and His grace in Jesus Christ, even in the times of trial.”

I want to invite you to respond to this invitation from +Bishop Brauer to strengthen our relationship. Given our “cold war” history with Russia it is even more pressing that we see beyond the historical divide.

One of our companions from Kazan, Philipp Zanko said, “in my opinion today friends in the U.S. are even more important for us than ever before. We need contacts with Western Christians in order to survive spiritually.”

Our relationship with the ELCER is a wonderful reminder to us that the body of Christ knows no national boundaries.

The members of our Synod who make up Team Russia can share with you countless stories of the blessings they have received both through visitation to sister congregations and through on-going correspondence. Team Russia will be the first to tell you of how faith-inspiring the witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia is.

The words of Team Russia member Marla Wardell capture the spirit of this important partnership, “Russia is a hard place for me to describe adequately. Although it is a major world player, it is still very much like a Third World country in many ways. There is a huge discrepancy between the rich and the poor. The pastors, who are working so tirelessly to spread the word and do the work of the church, are not wealthy and must use their own funds in many circumstances. The gracious people who made their homes available to us were not well off and really appreciated the small donation we gave them. Russia will forever hold a special place my heart, especially the wonderful brothers and sisters I met there.”

Please give prayerful consideration to engaging in some way with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia. Contact Ken Grigsby (360.675-468, island66@comcast.net) or Eva Mader (425.453-1071, evamader@aol.com) to arrange for a presentation at your church or simply to pose any questions you may have. Invite your people to consider giving a gift to: “Russian Pastors/Partnership: NWW.S.”

A little gift goes a long way in sending a message of hope and support.

Stay in touch and in the know!

Have you checked out the Synod Website Calendar? www.lutheransnw.org/calendar

Do you receive the Weekly Update eNews? www.lutheransnw.org/subscribe

Upcoming Leadership Events in our Synod

Let Justice Roll - Welcoming the Stranger: Loving our Immigrant Neighbors Friday, October 3 - Sunday October 5 @ El Camino de Emaus, Burlington

Let Justice Roll is a leadership event for high school students that encourages them to engage in issues of social, environmental, and economic justice to learn about God's call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). Participants are encouraged and challenged to become agents of positive change with a biblical and Christ-centered approach.

The 2014 theme, "Welcoming the Stranger: Loving our Immigrant Neighbors," explores this topic while asking how can I, as a Christian teenager, help live out Christ's message to take care of the poor, the widow, the orphan and vulnerable parts of our population? The program includes cross-cultural conversations, field-trips, worship, and a fiesta with food, music and dance.

Cost is \$95 per student which includes lodging, meals, and programming. Please visit TLC website for more details and link for registration: www.tlc.edu/cyfcenter/cyf_ljr.

Treasurer Workshop Saturday October 11, 8:30am-12noon @ Salem Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon

All Financial leaders of your congregation are invited to participate in this FREE workshop presented by the Synod Finance Committee. Treasurers, Financial Secretaries, Bookkeepers, Finance Committee Members and Pastors are encouraged to attend. The four areas being covered this year are: church audits and financial controls; non-profit status and new state rules; electronic giving; and reporting offerings. Find more information and link to online registration on our website: www.lutheransnw.org/calendar.

Worship Matters

October 25, 9am-4pm @ Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Seattle

All are invited for a day of learning, worship and inspiration. Lunch will be provided. Topics will include:

WORD: The people in worship

SACRAMENT: The things we do

SPACE: The place we gather

Our speakers for the day are: the Rev. Dr. Jana Childers, the Rev. Paul Hoffman, and Dr. Stephen Marshall-Ward.

Cost is \$30 for the first participant from congregation; \$15 for each additional participant from the same congregation - You are encouraged to bring your entire team! Find more information and link to online registration on our website: www.lutheransnw.org/calendar.

Year Round Stewardship With Rev. Chick Lane Saturday, October 11, 9am - 3pm @ Salem Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon

If stewardship is at the heart of living out our faith, we'll want to talk about it more than once a year. And, since it's about all of life, not money alone, we'll want to look at stewardship from many different perspectives during the year. You are invited to a day with the Rev. Chick Lane to explore "Year Round Stewardship."

Chick is the author of the popular book *Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregations*. He has served both as the Director of the ELCA Stewardship Key Leaders Program and Director of the Center for Stewardship Leaders at Luther Seminary.

The cost for the day is \$15/person. There is a max of \$75 charge for congregations. Don't miss out on this great opportunity! Find more information and link to online registration on our website: www.lutheransnw.org/calendar.

Bishop's Convocation: How Do We Understand Justice? Wednesday, November 12, 9:30am - 3:30pm @ Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Kirkland

Rostered Leaders are invited to join us for worship, conversation and fellowship. Our guest speaker for the day is Washington State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu. Be sure to arrive early and join us for the 8:30am-9:30am Registration & Fellowship time.

Cost is \$40/person. Scholarships are available, please contact Susan Berg at synod office by October 31. Find more information and link to online registration on our website: www.lutheransnw.org/calendar.

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

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