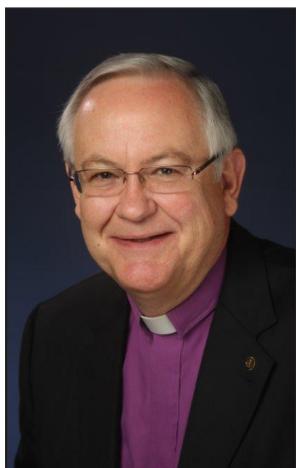


# The Spirit

Volume 32, Number 4  
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## Not a Winter Guy

by the Rev. Kirby Unti, Bishop



I am not a winter guy. I hate being cold, which I often am. Day after day of damp, wet weather cuts at me. The darkness weighs upon me. I resent waking to the dark and before my work day ends, it is dark already. I am prone to depression in the winter and have to up my self-care. No doubt I have at least a tinge of Seasonal Affective Disorder.

My fireplace is a wonderful friend. Life is good when I wake in the morning, put flame to the fire, grab the newspaper and savor two cups of freshly brewed coffee. I know the heat is just about right when the other family members exclaim, "Dad it is way too hot in here."

I am the guy who is aware of the shortest day of the year because following it I report to anyone who will listen: "We had a few more minutes of daylight, did you notice?" Winter is for me my time of endurance. It is my marathon.

One of the gifts of serving in this office is I find myself more frequently in Chicago. Chicago is God's way of reminding me how good I really have it. I might just die if I lived in Chicago year round.

Now that you know more about my love affair with winter you will understand why this past week my soul was revived and my spirit excited. Last week right at daybreak I heard for the first time since early

fall the birds singing in our back yard. I had to turn off the heater in the bathroom to confirm that in fact it was the birds singing that I was hearing.

It was faint but delightful. A holy sound. Once I locked on to the sound I stood silent in it for several minutes. I know the birds sing the spring in. Their song is their prayer that the leaves will return and blossoms of new life will sprout. It is a beautiful processional song right up there with Lift High the Cross. The cross is lifted and I know daylight and warmth are on their way.

Easter for me is more than a single Sunday. Easter for me is when I know that life is good again and that it means me well. Easter is when my soul is restored and spirits rise. Easter is when the birds in the back yard remind me after a time of my own darkness. He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

For so many of you, whom I know and love, who are going through your own time of darkness, listen for the song of Easter. May you know the power of Easter to heal and make us whole again. Rise early and listen to the birds sing.

*My beloved speaks and says to me:  
"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;  
for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth; the  
time of singing has come, and the voice of the  
turtledove is heard in our land."*

**Song of Solomon 2:10-12**  
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**Synod Assembly - May 15 & 16 - Lynnwood Convention Center**

**Registration Opens April 1**

**Check out the details at:**

**[www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly](http://www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly)**

# Get Ready for Synod Assembly Business

## Nominations

Nominations are being received for the following three roles. For additional information and to access the Nomination Form, please see the assembly webpage ([www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly](http://www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly)). Questions? Contact Nominating Committee Chairperson, Pastor Kevin Bates ([pastor@magnolialutheranchurch.com](mailto:pastor@magnolialutheranchurch.com)).

### Synod Consultation Committee

This committee does not meet on a regular basis. These members may be called upon to advise the bishop in cases of conflict or alleged misconduct by rostered leaders or congregations. We will elect 2 clergy, 1 lay female, and 1 lay male (allowed to serve one 6-year term).

### Synod Committee on Discipline

If charges are brought by the bishop against a rostered leader or congregation, 6 members of this committee (and 6 members of the Churchwide Discipline Committee) will meet to consider the charges. Again, this committee does not meet on a regular basis, only as needed. We will elect 2 clergy, 1 lay female, and 1 lay male (allowed to serve one 6-year term).

### Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

Our synod will send ten voting members\* to the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to be held August 8-13 in New Orleans. The ELCA Churchwide Assembly is the primary decision-making body of the church and gathers every three years. Voting members are chosen locally from across the ELCA, representing the diverse communities, congregations, synods, perspectives and geographic contexts of our church.

Together with other leaders of the ELCA, and guided by the Holy Spirit, they discuss the work of the church in the world and make decisions reflecting the challenges we face and the strengths we all bring to loving and serving our neighbors — locally and globally — in the name of Jesus Christ. Over the course of five days, voting members: hear reports and review the work of churchwide leaders; receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies; elect officers, board members and other leaders; establish ELCA churchwide policy; adopt a budget; and conduct other business.

The Assembly can be lively and challenging, yet it is respectful of the diverse nature of the church and the world we live in. It reflects how we participate in God's work in the world while embracing each other's questions, perspectives, complexities and strengths. It provides a time and place for growth and change while remaining rooted in Scripture, tradition, Lutheran confessions and the rich histories of our congregations and communities.

*\*The synod bishop and vice president are automatically part of this total. Additionally, we will elect 3 more clergy members, 1 more lay female, 2 more lay males, 2 youth or young adults. Of these elected, 2 will be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.*

## Resolutions

One avenue for congregations, clusters, synod committees and voting members to address issues and propose a plan for action is "the resolution." Resolutions help organize the work of the assembly by clarifying important issues or concerns. Resolutions are first reviewed by the Reference & Counsel Committee which will make recommendations to the assembly to facilitate its work, but the resolutions belong to the assembly and may be amended, rejected, or adopted after consideration by the voting members.

### How to Write a Resolution

First, validate your idea. Do your research - has a similar resolution been passed at a previous assembly? Will it conflict with the synod or churchwide constitution? Discuss your proposed resolution(s) with other people. Does this resolution address a major issue in the life and ministry of the synod? Is the issue addressed in this resolution worthy of the Assembly's consideration?

Then, write the resolution. There is a guide to help you on our synod website ([www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly](http://www.lutheransnw.org/2015-Synod-Assembly)). Once you have completed the form, send it to the synod office, as directed.

Next, the Reference & Counsel Committee will review the resolutions before they are posted to the synod website. As part of this process, they may edit or rewrite proposed resolutions, main motions, or other matters, or submit substitute resolutions or main motions.

### Resolution submission deadline is April 30, 2015.

Resolutions received up to the cutoff time (usually 12noon on the first day of the Synod Assembly) will also be reviewed by the Reference & Counsel Committee. However, they will only be considered by the assembly if time allows and the assembly votes to address the resolution. (Synod Constitution S7.34.01)

Finally, be prepared to speak to your resolution at the synod assembly May 15 & 16 at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

**Questions?** Contact Reference & Counsel Chairperson, Pastor Tor Berg ([tberg@flcbothell.org](mailto:tberg@flcbothell.org)).

*The Spirit*, a publication of the NW Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is intended for synod congregations & organizations.

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Info for the May issue is due to the Synod Office by April 6