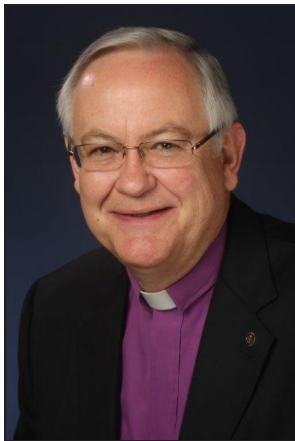


The Spirit

A Church of Many Blessings! by the Rev. Kirby Unti, Bishop



There are those moments in life when I feel like I have lived a charmed life. The Biblical word would be blessed. Blessing for me is the experience of being in rich relationships that mean me well. Looking back over my life I realize that there is a pathway that has led to the blessings. It is the pathway of discovering the wider expressions of the church. Let me just share a few of

the many that have charmed my life.

In 1983 I was blessed to tag along with Kim who was a delegate to the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, Canada. It was the most colorful pageantry of people all wearing their native dress and speaking in their own languages. Worship was a Pentecost experience with global music filling the air.

We were privileged to meet a priest, Fr. John Shaute, who served as the Pope's personal aide and Bishop Desmond Tutu who shared a mail box with Kim. Our world was expanding beyond our imaginations and shrinking to where we were breaking bread and sharing in conversation with world leaders. The ten days we spent in Vancouver have forever shaped our lives and the memories continue to bring us blessing.

In 2006 I went on what for me was a daring adventure. I left my family behind and traveled to Northern Ethiopia where, along with Pr. Dick Ginarsrud, we visited many of our Northwest

Washington Synod sister congregations of the Mekane Yesus church. It was fascinating to visit villages where the only way in was to walk on dirt roads. We shared in meals of goat, lamb, and chicken covered in spicy sauces and scooped up with pieces of injera. We stayed in places where there was no electricity and where a steel plow share was considered high technology. The images of the agrarian life in the Bible were being played out before our very eyes. My time in Ethiopia and the people I met have been a great blessing to me.

Three times I have been privileged to participate in a Churchwide Assembly. The first was tagging along again with Kim who was a voting member at the Constituting Convention in Ohio. It was an historic moment that was filled with anticipation. Later we would attend in Orlando and this last year in Pittsburgh. My eyes on each occasion filled with tears to witness the way this church cares for the world. I hope those of you who attended our recent Synod Assembly were equally inspired.

The opportunity to serve as your Bishop is another example of the privilege of seeing the width and depth of this church we love. Kim and I typically travel to a different congregation each Sunday where we are warmly welcomed and have the opportunity to share in stories of how Christ is present and moving amongst God's people here in the Northwest. It is a great honor to see and experience the abundance of life and joy lived out in our churches. You dear friends have been a great blessing in our lives.

I want to encourage all of you to be open to the invitation, the opportunity to participate in the many expressions of this church which together we know as the Body of Christ.

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

Upcoming Events

2015 Youth Gathering July 15 – 19, 2015 in Detroit!

June 2014 - INFO SESSIONS

Join other leaders (paid & volunteer) from around the synod at one of these information sessions. We will share information, answer questions and provide a time for collaborating with one another.

Saturday, June 14, 9am - 11am
Our Savior's, Everett

Thursday, June 19, 12noon - 2pm
Saint Andrew's, Bellevue (during Time for You)

OTHER Important Dates:

May 15, 2014

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS OPEN

Volunteers (aged 19 and older) may apply to help out at The Gathering. Please see more information here: www.elca.org/YouthGathering

May 15 - July 14, 2014

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCESS OPEN

Please note that the ELCA Youth Gathering has funds available for financial assistance for young people who need it to attend this event. Applications for financial assistance will be accepted online from May 15 to July 15, 2014, or until the funds are depleted. (You will need to know your congregational ID) www.elca.org/YouthGathering/Registration-Info

September 15

"SOFT OPENING" of REGISTRATION

This means that you will be able to set up your congregational account by entering your congregation's information into the Youth Gathering database.

October 15, 2014

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION OPENING

Now, you may go back into your congregational account and click the submit button to register! Registration will close May 15, 2015.

As the Gathering approaches, and folks have begun registering, we will plan a few more times for information-sharing, Q & A, and a special youth & adult event next spring. There are a number of folks in our synod who are helping to shape this upcoming event by serving on one of the national planning teams and on our synod day planning team (the one day during the gathering that our synod congregations will be together for worship, learning and fellowship.) Please know that these teams are working hard to ensure that this event is meaningful, fun and safe!

One key contact to help YOU & YOUR CONGREGATION prepare is **Susan Berg**. She is serving as our Synod Gathering Coordinator. Susan will lead our information events noted above. Feel free to contact her with questions you may have!
206-783-9292 OR susan@lutheransnw.org

Building Safe Communities

Three Upcoming Opportunities

Register online: www.lutheransnw.org

Boundaries Training

For all Rostered Leaders & Professional Staff

Thursday, May 29th 10am - 4pm at Christ, Federal Way
Join leaders from around the NW WA and SW WA synods for an all-day boundaries training to help us understand how to keep ourselves healthy and to ensure that our needs as leaders are met without participation by those we serve. This training will be led by Pastor Mark Nelson, Coordinator for Missional Leadership of the Region 1 of the ELCA and Pastor Susan Kintner, Assistant to the Bishop of the Oregon Synod. Cost is \$20, includes lunch.

"After Pastor" Training

For Those Who May Serve In A Church Where Clergy Misconduct Has Previously Occurred

Friday June 6th 10am - 4pm at St. Matthew's, Renton
Clergy misconduct, and the resulting violation of trust, is a devastating event in the life of a congregation. While steps are taken to prevent misconduct, the unhealthy dynamics it can create within the congregation may persist for years. ELCA Misconduct Consultant Barbara Keller will lead a workshop for all pastors who, intentionally or unintentionally, find themselves in this ministry situation. Interim pastors are especially encouraged to attend, and all clergy are invited. Cost is \$20, includes lunch.

Boundaries Workshop

For Those Working With Children & Youth

Sat June 7th 9:30am - 12:30pm at St. Matthew's, Renton
The NW WA and SW WA synods are hosting a half-day workshop on healthy boundary issues for those in congregations and ministries who work with children, youth, and other vulnerable populations. A perfect event for full-time or part-time staff members and volunteers. ELCA Misconduct Consultant Barbara Keller will lead this workshop. Cost is \$10, includes materials and morning refreshments.

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.

Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA

5519 Phinney Ave North
Seattle, WA 98103-5829
Telephone: 206-783-9292
Toll Free: 1-800-244-6997
Fax: 206-783-9833

Email: office@lutheransnw.org
Website: www.lutheransnw.org

Information for the July issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by June 6