

# The Spirit

The Spirit is a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA. It is intended for synod members, congregations & organizations. They are encouraged to reproduce these articles in their own monthly organizational publications.  
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August 2021



## From the Bishop:

My dining room table has been my office for sixteen months. Right now, as I look at the surface I see my computer, a picture of my kids, my phone, a coffee cup, two glasses filled halfway with water, my notebook, gum, sticky notes, my Bible, *The Management of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Roster of the ELCA*, *The ELCA Constitution*, various stacks of paper, some books I want to read, the ELW, my devotion book, and pushed way out of the way, at the very edge of the table, my lovely quilted table runner and candles that used to sit in the middle of the dining room table (when it wasn't being used to eat on).



If my dining room table could speak, it would say, "I am tired. I am tired of you sitting here day after day. I am tired of you making a mess on me. I am tired of not being used for what I'm supposed to be used for. I am tired."

Or maybe ... I'm projecting.

When this pandemic first hit, the synod staff and I went into emergency mode. We made plans. We sent out emails. We revised (and revised and revised) COVID-19 guidelines. Like you, we kept going and going. And we have survived. And you have survived. Together, we have survived.

And together ... we are tired.

As you might recall, Jesus also got tired. There are many verses throughout the Gospels where we read: "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." ... "Jesus was sleeping." ... "He didn't want anyone to know which house he was staying in."

And it didn't start in the Gospels. Truly, from the beginning of time, we hear how God rested. In Genesis, God rested on the seventh day. And God understood rest not only for Godself but also for the very creatures that God created. The only thing that God calls holy in the creation account is the sabbath. When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments God specifically declared, "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy." And this commandment was for everyone – including outsiders and animals. Fully fifteen percent of life was to be sabbath. In this commandment we hear how the sabbath is sacred for those who live in relationship with a living God – this God who rescued people from slavery in a land where no rest was allowed.

I think somewhere we forgot the rhythms that God placed on this earth. The rhythm that is in the very way that trees grow and lay dormant; how tides ebb and flow; how spring moves into summer and into fall and into winter and back to spring. While it is true that Jesus did say, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath," he also said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Sabbath is a time of rest, a time of renewal, and a time to listen for what God is up to in our lives, in our communities, and in our world. Sabbath is a time to reflect on the world without rushing to "fix it." Sabbath is not "guilt-ridden stolen time." Instead, sabbath is holy. Sabbath is sacred. Sabbath is commanded and modeled by God.

Beloveds, we are called to sabbath. We are called to sabbath even when it seems the needs of all are pressing in on us. While you – and your vocations, your desires, your gifts, your responsibilities – are important, so is understanding that the world does not revolve around your work. And, in taking sabbath, you become a better leader and servant.

Enjoy August. Take sabbath. Let others take sabbath. The world is in good hands. In the best hands. In God's hands. (And yes, I am going to clean off my dining room table. Soon.)

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## From the VEEP

The Synod is looking for a few good people!  
Ask not what the Synod can do for you, ask what you can do for the Synod!

We have a lot of things going on here in the NW Washington Synod and we need volunteers to help us accomplish all of our goals.

We have a brand new **Volunteer Recruitment Team**, and you might hear from them soon as they begin reaching out to folks to fill some of these slots. If you feel called to share your gifts with the synod, you can also reach out to me at [veep@lutheransnw.org](mailto:veep@lutheransnw.org) or to our Director of Evangelical Mission, Dianne Johnson, at [dem@lutheransnw.org](mailto:dem@lutheransnw.org).

- **Finance Committee:**  
As outlined in our current Financial Policies document – 6 members.  
Four appointed by SC to 4-year terms. Terms shall be staggered. Committee also includes the Synod Treasurer and the bishop or a representative of the bishop's office. Functions: gather and compile information for the development of the budget, review and recommend revisions to these financial policies, monitor income and expenditures, support the treasurer, and serve as a resource to Synod Council.
- **Restricted Accounts Review Task Force:**  
This will be a limited term, single task group.  
The goal is to research the history of our restricted accounts to determine what these monies may be used for. Members of this team should have good historical research skills. This isn't so much about the money as the *history* of the money.
- **Maritime Ministry Endowment Fund:**  
Appointed by the SC to 3-year, staggered terms, at least 3 members. Meet at least twice a year to promote the fund and distribute income— Currently needs a new chairperson. The Treasurer and Bishop or bishop designee are ex officio members.
- **Because of You: Renewing Congregations Fund Oversight:**  
Purpose: receive proposals for initiatives/projects for their consideration in dispersing the funds.  
We are looking for four people, 2 lay, 2 rostered. All meetings could be by zoom.

There will be many other opportunities as we do the work of discovering what a post pandemic church looks like. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone." 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

### Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:

- Secretary Gail Rautmann resigned her position due to changing personal circumstances. We thanked her for her service and appointed former synod secretary Deanna Wildermuth as Secretary Pro Tempore. The position is up for election at Synod Assembly 2022.
- Executive Committee met on July 8. We worked on the agenda for the July 17 council meeting and discussed issues around reopening churches as the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- Synod Council met July 17. We welcomed our newly elected members and bid farewell to those whose terms have come to an end. (Find the full list of members here: <https://lutheransnw.org/pages/synod-council-committees>)

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