

CROSS

Connection



The Cross Connection is a monthly publication of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod published for its clergy, members, deacons, lay leadership and ecumenical partners.

June 2017

God's Beloved People,

At least in this format, I write to you for the last time. We often skip a July newsletter and by August it will be time for our new bishop to introduce herself to you.

It has been a wonderful run of 18 years in this office. You've given me the deep privilege of leadership, which I take to mean helping us address our most important questions, proposing and testing a future, calling out faithfulness in others, and giving thanks for service. To all of you who have been church with me during these years, thank you!

We've just completed another synod assembly and in mid-August will welcome Pastor Kristen Kuempel into this office. She will be installed on September 16th, by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. The challenges of the office are clear and include at least reconciling our resources with synod staffing and persisting in the challenge of working with local pastors to serve each of you in your vocations, your callings.

I'm still of the opinion that we've aped foreign traditions in stewardship, evangelism, and service while ignoring the second greatest gift of the Reformation, that of vocation or calling. In these next years I hope to work on these questions toward the day when you become, in your daily service in Jesus' name, an evangelist, a steward, and a model of gratitude for all that God has done! To reconceive and welcome you into such service will bless the world and offer you deep satisfaction in your serving. For those of you already doing this, Congratulations!

As for me and my house? Susan and I intend to live in Spokane until we either become a burden to the new bishop or are called away to work or family. Eastern Washington is not a backwater of the Evergreen State, and Idaho and Wyoming offer the same stunning vistas and independent, proud people that we've come to love. We are at home here. For me there are lots of Ice-Age flood geologic features to visit, some trout streams to exploit, and with luck, some huckleberry bushes to discover. I pray Susan will continue to write and teach. In a really perfect world Gonzaga will offer our Mary Emily a position as professor and Spokane will see their good fortune in hiring Jason Duba as an expert in planning bicycle paths for alternative transportation. Our Magdalena may be a permanent mid-westerner, but Minneapolis/St Paul is not foreign territory!

In everything we will continue to be the Church of Jesus Christ with you, announcing and enacting the stunning reversal of fortune that is the Gospel of Jesus, His life for ours, and opening a freedom that is simply breath-taking in hope.

May our gracious God bless you and keep you, may the Lord's face shine upon you and give you peace.

Your brother in Christ,

Bishop Martin Wells

