

# 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.*

November 2017

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther writes the following explanation of “Give us this day our daily bread.” ***God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with Thanksgiving. WHAT THEN DOES DAILY BREAD MEAN? Everything included in the necessities and nourishment of our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.***

***Like many families, there are times when our budget is tight. And like many parents, when the budget gets tight for one reason or another, we get a little anxious. And our girls pick up on this anxiety, and begin to be anxious themselves, fearfully asking, “Are we poor?!”***

Our answer is truthful, and immediate, “No. We are not poor. We have enough for everything we need—and even a few of the things we want! God has given us everything we need—we are blessed beyond measure.”

Now is the time of year when many different things are happening. Congregations are contemplating stewardship needs for the next year. Synods are, too. We’re all living in a time when pennies have to stretch further than they did before. But we’re also not a poor synod—any more than my family is poor. In reality, we are as the people of God in Eastern Washington-Idaho (and our two Wyoming dimples!) really richly blessed. God provides daily bread for people, congregations and our synod. He draws us into relationship with one another to help support one another in the work he has called us to do—people supporting people, synod and congregation supporting one another.

You’re probably expecting me to make a pitch for increased mission support to the synod. I’m not going to.

Instead what I’m going to ask you to do is look at your budgets a little differently this year. Instead of looking and wondering if it will be enough (anxiety), look at it and think, “Wow! Think of all the good we can do with this money!” Think of the 3rd graders who will get bibles, think of the hungry who will be fed, think of the heat that will welcome you into the building on a cold, winter Sunday morning, think of the paper that will be turned into the bulletins that we will use to guide our worship, the confirmands in their white robes, baptismal candles lit and held before the faces of babies, bread and wine broken and poured for the forgiveness of sins, think of the pastors and staff that will be provided for and help guide you in ministry, think of the ways that the Synod uses that mission support to give to Lutheran Community Services, seminaries, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran Outdoor Ministry, provide mental health resources for church leaders, provide synodical staff to help provide support and resources to congregations, giving to Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and many other ways we work together—we are church together, for the sake of the world. Make the shift to thinking in abundance, not in anxiety. Pray over your budgets, and know that if God is calling you to step out: he will also provide whatever daily bread you need along the way. Because He gives us everything we need, even when we stubbornly insist that what is His is ours.

I give thanks to God every day for the people of this synod. Your faithfulness, your stubbornness, your generosity. For the way you make the love of Christ known in your communities. For the way you keep showing up. For the way you won’t back down. For the way you keep trying. For the ministries you hold dear.

It is a humbling thing to be the bishop of such a synod, and in this month when we take particular time to stop and give thanks to God for his abundance: I give thanks for you.

May God bless you, and give peace to your beloved hearts.

+Bishop Kristen

