



NEWS & NOTES

News and notes from the Bishop's office

August 2018

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From the Bishop's Pen

Who am I when I am not who I used to be? The question can be asked by anyone as they go through life. A student heading off to college, a person newly married or newly single again, recently retired, anyone with a medical diagnosis that changes their life. Who am I when I am not who I used to be? We often don't think about it that way, we often don't think about the changes in our life in terms of our identity, and yet it is an important question. For many the phrase "change is bad" is a common one, and yet the natural changes of our life such as school and work and family are ones we embrace. It is not so much change that is hard, but loss. Loss brings grief, and many would rather avoid grief. One way that we talk about change in this diocese is to say that change is natural and normal, and that the goal as we navigate that change is to take the best of our past with us into the future and to know how to set down that which needs to stay behind.

Who are we when we are not who we used to be? The question is also asked of communities, not just individuals. Communities change as well. This is true of our towns; it is also true of our congregations. How we manage that change, how well we take the best of our past into our future and set down that which needs to stay behind, will make a big difference in what results from the changes. As both individuals and as communities it requires courage and honesty to embrace the reality of the changes around us and to walk faithfully into the future knowing that God is always walking with us.

This is our call as followers of Jesus. Jesus said "follow me" and to follow means to move, we are always moving.

In July Christ Church in Zillah celebrated their final service as a congregation. Holy Trinity in Wallace did the same this past spring, and St. Dunstan's in Grand Coulee will celebrate their final service on September 9th. To see three congregations close in such rapid succession is hard. It also comes from long and challenging conversations and discernment by the members of those congregations. The issues and outcomes are not identical in all three cases, but there are some similarities. In all three congregations the bulk of the members no longer lived in the town where the congregation was located, which makes it very hard to be a part of the community. In all three cases there are good options for the members to find worship at another, closer,

congregation. With Holy Trinity we have worked with our Lutheran partners and the church in Pinehurst is now a joint Lutheran Episcopal congregation. Members of Christ Church have been instrumental in Between the Ridges and have been attending St. Michael's twice a month already. A number of the members of St. Dunstan's live closer to Moses Lake than Grand Coulee.

As the Bishop I can worry about what impact it has on other congregations to see three closing so close together. I also know that this was not a sudden decision on their part, but discernment that took a hard look at the questions "who are we now, what is God calling us to be and do now?" The decision to close was made by the members of the congregation and it was not a decision to "die" but to move into new life in a different place and a different way. This is faithful discernment.

Congregations closing is not the only story to be told. On September 9, after celebrating the final service in Grand Coulee, I will head to Winthrop where I will be with the Methow Episcopal Community, a Bishop's Chapel, a new Episcopal congregation too new to be a formal mission or parish and yet already vibrant and thriving. Methow Episcopal came into being through the vision and work of dedicated laity who wanted to have Episcopal worship and who made sure that it happened. It is a great example of new life. The "not who I used to be" is not always something less, sometimes it is something greater! There are other congregations talking about the need for more clergy to serve the growth that they are experiencing. I am talking with folks about where other church plants might take place in our diocese and how we can engage in intentional, relational, evangelism.

In many ways we are never "who we used to be" and yet we are also always "who we used to be." Our identity is always "beloved of God." Our identity and our work is to be faithful followers of Jesus. When we claim this identity as our foundation the changes of our lives can be embraced and we can live with confidence and boldness as we step into the future following Jesus wherever he takes us.

+Gretchen

THE COLLEGE FOR CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The College for Congregational Development is a program of multiple dioceses and we are indeed fortunate to have it in ours. Not only do we serve congregations in our own diocese, we offer other dioceses the opportunity to send teams of their own. We have clergy and laity coming to Spokane from a number of different dioceses coming this month for this year's class.

The Paulsen House office will be closed August 6-10 so that staff may attend and teach at the college. If your congregation does not have anyone coming this summer take note and ask who might be good candidates to attend next August. The College for Congregational Development is a comprehensive program to help our congregations grow and develop in ways that are faithful and true to their identity and is a great way to help us learn how to embrace and manage the changes in our lives.

LOVED AND CALLED; LISTEN AND RESPOND. LET US NOW LISTEN!

During this year we are exploring our diocesan theme and spending time with each word. We have explored what it means to be loved and called by God and now we need to think about how we listen, and practice listening. All congregations are asked to do the following: in your worship service, at least once between now and September 15, take a full minute after the OT and NT reading to simply be in silence, allowing God to speak to you in the silence. Ask the congregation members how that period of silence impacted their worship and sense of listening to hear the words of God through the words of the scripture and in the silence. Your diocesan council representative will be in contact with congregations before the September council meeting to ask how this experience was received. Thanks for your participation!

DIOCESAN CONVENTION



Loved & Called; Listen & Respond

54th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

In the midst of summer, it can be hard to think about an event in October, but it is not too soon to be planning for our diocesan convention! Registration is up, [register now](#) and receive an early bird discount! Registration rate increases after September 1st. So don't wait, act now! For more information about our convention please see the Bishop's invitation letter and more on the diocesan website:

<http://www.spokanediocese.org/Convention/annual-convention.html>

DIOCESAN MEN'S RETREAT

Hosted at Camp Cross August 17-19, 2018 – Our Life in Christ According to St. Paul: Join other men in learning from Paul about our life in Christ, while spending time relaxing and enjoying beautiful Camp Cross.

Paul was alert to how the Spirit gathers us into a community of faith, love, and hope. The Revs. Bill Osborne, Rick Matters, and John Palarine will shepherd this community by focusing on subjects germane to men's spirituality. We'll enjoy small group discussions, one-on-one spiritual direction, singing, laughing, praying, swimming, hiking and "holy" hanging out.

Return home renewed & equipped in new ways to follow Jesus. Register online, the subsidized cost is \$120 for the weekend. https://spokanediocese.formstack.com/forms/diocesan_events

BISHOP'S VISITATION SCHEDULE RELEASED

You can find the next 18 months of the Bishop's schedule including visitations now online. Simply go to Bishop Rehberg's webpage on the diocesan website here: <http://www.spokanediocese.org/Diocese/bishop-rehberg.html>



Contact Us

245 E 13th Ave
 Spokane, WA 99202-1114
 509.624.3191, Fax 509.747.0049
malloryd@spokanediocese.org
www.spokanediocese.org

BISHOP'S AUGUST & SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE

Find the diocesan calendar [online here](#).

Date	Itinerary Item	Location
8/1-2	Jr High	Camp Cross
8/5-6	Sr High	Camp Cross
8/5-11	College for Congregational Development	Cathedral, Spokane
8/6-8/10	Paulsen House diocesan office closed	
8/16	NE Clericus	Spokane
8/17-8/19	Diocesan Men's Retreat	Camp Cross
8/20	Paulsen House diocesan office closed	
8/24-26	Women's Weekend	Camp Cross
8/30-9/4	Bishop's Vacation	
9/7-9/8	Commission on Ministry Formation Weekend	IHRC
9/9	Bishop's visit to Methow Bishop's Chapel & Closing Visit for St. Dunstan's, Grand Coulee	Winthrop, Wa Grand Coulee, WA
9/14-9/15	Diocesan Council	IHRC, Spokane
9/16	Bishop's visit to St. James'	Cashmere, WA
9/23	Bishop's visit to St. Matthew's	Prosser, WA
9/28 from 5-7:30p	Empty Bowls Fundraiser for West Central Episcopal Mission	
9/29	Fall Regional Gathering Day	
9/30	Bishop's visit to Episcopal Church of the Nativity	Lewiston, ID