



"Speak, Lord, We Are Listening"

NEWS & NOTES

From The Bishop's Office Of The Episcopal Diocese Of
Spokane

May 2024

Vol 8 | Issue 5



CLAIM THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

I was recently on a zoom meeting where a question was asked: "how can you see difficulties as opportunities?" It is a great question, and one that if we can embrace and answer changes how we respond. For instance, almost everywhere I go congregations talk about their worries about money and membership. We are seeing challenges in congregational budgets, decreased members, and fewer young people. If we only see this

reality as difficulties it will impact how we try to “fix” it. If instead we can see our current reality as an opportunity, it reframes our response completely. We lose the fear, we embrace the challenge, we recognize the possibilities instead of wringing our hands and saying we can’t. Most people in our towns are not in any congregation, which means that we have a great opportunity to introduce people to the joy of following Jesus and invite them to do so in community? Most people want to contribute to meaningful work, how can we speak to not only our members but those outside the church about how our ministry makes a difference and invite them to contribute? There is fear in our society about the differences we see between people and ideologies, how can we be people of love and hope in a time of fear and model that we can be in conversation and community even when we disagree? What are the difficulties in your congregation or community that you might refrain as an opportunity?


May brings the Feast of Pentecost. It is the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church - the Body of Christ incarnate in the world today. The difficulties before us today will not be overcome by our own strength and skill, but by the power of God working through us (and others!). We never need to rely only on ourselves alone, we have the Holy Spirit within us. Sometimes I think that we look for answers from outside “experts” instead of spending time in prayer and discernment and then relying on the power of God for the work.

God loves us so much that God created everything out of love, and then came among us in Jesus, and then sends us the Spirit to always be with us. This is an amazing truth that changes the world. Are we willing to see the difficulties we face as opportunities to really make a difference? How might being excited instead of worried transform our work?

This month I ask you to claim again the power of the Holy Spirit and embrace whatever is before you that you now see as a difficulty to view instead as an opportunity. Claim the power of the Holy Spirit, seize the opportunity, and work with God to make a difference.

+ *Gretchen*


FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

A photograph of several black graduation caps (mortarboards) with gold tassels, held up by hands against a blurred background of green foliage.

THE EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE OF SPOKANE

THE COLLEGE FOR CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SpokaneDiocese.org

A close-up photograph of several thick, old books with worn spines and pages, stacked together.

DO YOU LONG TO DEEPEN YOUR CONGREGATION'S LIFE IN COMMUNITY; TO GAIN CLARITY ON ITS CORE PURPOSE? DO YOU WISH TO EQUIP YOUR CONGREGATION FOR MINISTRY? DO YOU YEARN FOR FRUITFUL AND PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS AND PROCESSES? IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, COME TO THE COLLEGE FOR CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT! THIS COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPS CONGREGATIONS AND LEADERSHIP TO BE THEIR BEST SELVES LIVING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

**SESSIONS
START**

**AUGUST
4TH-9TH**

REGISTER BEFORE JUNE 1ST

ZOOM ORIENTATION
JULY 27TH
10AM-12PM

FIRST THURSDAY ZOOM SERIES

A zoom series to grow, strengthen and plant our congregations. Following the 3 directives of our strategic plan, we will explore 9 topics in 2024. All are invited to attend this Zoom series, and they are free. Simply use the same link to log in each month. Share the link with others in your congregations.

UPCOMING - May 2nd: Listening to Our Neighbors

As part of our strategic plan implementation, we have been focusing on listening – listening to God, listening to one another, and listening for God in the voices of others. God is present and speaking to us through our neighbors. Come learn about engaging your neighbors in practices of listening in order to act.

MORE TOPICS FOR THE YEAR

September 5: Data Gathering - How do we know what we know and how can we learn what we don't
Gathering data about our congregations, our neighbors, and our communities is one way of learning. There are many ways of gathering data, some that increase our learning and some that don't. We will hear stories, see some examples and have a chance to practice data-gathering for the purpose of learning and action.

- **October 3:** Evangelism 201
- **November 7:** Budgeting and budgets
- **December 5th:** Discerning and recruiting leaders (vestry / BC)

[WWW.ZOOM.US/JOIN](https://www.zoom.us/join)

MEETING ID
827 6025 3562

PASSCODE
661675



ENCOURAGEMENT FROM GATHERING DAY

Got Vital Christian Community? Yes, we do! At Gathering Day we heard story after story of faithful, innovative, bold efforts in worship, outreach and formation. A common theme in the stories was collaboration with "outsiders" who share our space or share our ministry goals.

The vitality of our congregations depends, in part, on our relationships with people and groups and agencies that aren't in the pews on Sunday mornings. The book Vital Christian Community by Phil Brochard and Alissa Newton is a great resource for nurturing those relationships, replacing the traditional idea of "member" (you're in or you're out) with an expansive, welcoming, hospitable relationship of "belonging". (see Chapter 3).

You've got Vital Christian Community, a clear, succinct guide to nurturing the characteristics of a healthy congregation. Each congregation was sent at least one copy, a year or so ago. It has a chapter on growing collaborative relationships,, and much much more.

Find it! Read it! Work with it!

-Jan Griffin

I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY

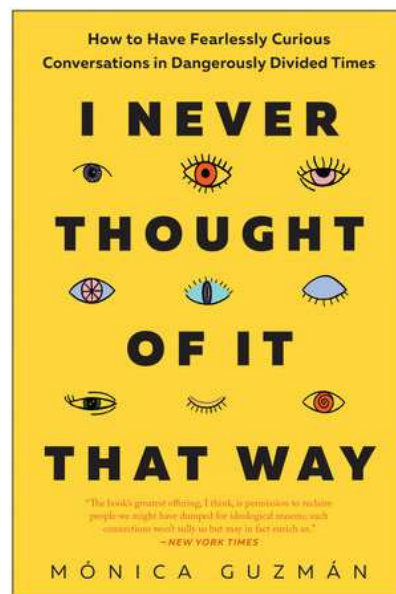
ZOOM GROUP

Join this conversation about how to really listen to someone whose views are different from your own. Journalist author, Monica Guzman, lays out the dynamics that drive people apart and then teaches a number of skills to bridge that distance.

These listening skills equip us to better love our neighbor, especially to love those neighbors who might drive you crazy by their passionate opinions that oppose your own.

This group meets via Zoom on Thursdays at 6:30pm to 8:00pm on the following dates: May 16, 23, 30, and June 6, 13, and 20.

[REGISTER HERE](#)





Register now!

Find all the information at:

www.campcross.org

SUMMER CAMP 2024

MAY 17-19	Labor of Love
MAY 24-26	Youth Labor of Love
JUNE 14-16	Women's Weekend & Men's Weekend
JUNE 21-23	Leaders in Training
JUNE 30 - JULY 2	Mini Camp
JULY 3-6	Days at the Lake
JULY 7-12	Intermediate Camp
JULY 14-19	Arts & Music Camp
JULY 21-26	Outdoor Adventure Camp
JULY 28 - AUG 2	Mid High Camp
AUGUST 4-10	Senior High Camp
AUGUST 22-25	Young Adult Camp
AUG 30 - SEPT 2	Labor Day Family Camp
SEPTEMBER 6-8	Adult Weekend

Contact Alex Flannagan
Canon for Camp, Youth, and Family Ministry
alexfl@spokanediocese.org or 425-577-1217



SUPPORT CAMP CROSS



Camp Cross depends on the generosity of past & present benefactors – those whose lives have been so thoroughly transformed by their own Camp Cross experience that they want to ensure that experience for future generations, as well. The property & facilities of Camp Cross belong to all of us, which means we also share in the responsibility to care for it and to properly develop it for present & future guests. The gift of Camp Cross has been made available to you and me by the financial commitment of a whole host of individuals who have gone before us. As you imagine the positive legacy

you hope to leave in the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, we hope you'll consider making that legacy visible and effective through the work of Camp Cross.

Please consider making your financial contribution today!

[DONATE HERE](#)

CANONS CORNER

Church Growth and Development Grant



2024 CHURCH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The Church Growth and Development Committee is pleased to announce the availability of funds for 2024 for grants to congregations and faith communities in the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane. Grants are available to fund projects to develop more faithful, healthy, and effective communities of faith.

Successful grants will be consistent with the aspects of Congregational Development, and the diocesan mission.

The Committee will have up to \$20000 available to award. It is unlikely that any one community would qualify for more than \$3000.

Please **submit** the grant application by **September 6, 2024**.

We prefer that you submit the grant by email to the Church Growth and Development Committee

Tom Baxter

thomasb8691@gmail.com

(865)805-1089

For more info or to answer any questions, please visit [SpokaneDiocese.org](https://www.spokane-diocese.org) under Resources or contact Susan Cleveley at SusanC@SpokaneDiocese.org.

BEING EVANGELIZED BY GOD

BY CANON ANDREA FARLEY

This month, I'm beginning a series on evangelism with the hope that we can wonder together about it, potentially shifting our perspective on what evangelism is, how we experience it, and how we might practice it.

When we discuss evangelism, it can quickly veer into "should" territory, such as, "I know we **should** be practicing evangelism, but ...". And then this sentiment can easily devolve into fear: Fear of putting oneself out there or of rejection, fear of harming relationships, or even a deeper fear of our churches dying out.

I wonder what might change, however, if we shifted our perspective on evangelism by first recognizing that we ourselves are being evangelized continually, drawn into the love and presence of God.

One of the commercials I remember most vividly from my childhood was for Werther's Original caramels. There was typically a grandfather figure, many times in a rocking chair. He would hoist a child into his lap, then hand them a caramel. There would be a deliberate unwrapping process and then the child would dissolve in delight, snuggling into the grandfather's chest, as the caramel began dissolving in the child's mouth. Now obviously the commercial was intended to sell caramels, convincing the viewer that they too could experience the delight and wonder, the connection and love, the deliciousness of a single candy. But they convinced the audience to buy their product by showing what it was like to experience eating one.

When it comes to evangelism, we always experience the deep love and evangelism of God first. At its core, evangelism is the work of the Spirit. Her work, beginning in creation and continuing today, is grounded in continual birthing of new life, of calling us into deeper life and experience, and of drawing us ever closer to the love and presence of the Trinity. Evangelism, the overflowing love that compels us closer to God and one another and our self-understanding, is God's work. This offers us a profound shift in our perspective on evangelism. Suddenly the "should" energy loses its power as we recognize that God is already evangelizing each and every part of creation that also includes each and every person. Including you and me.

I wonder what you feel in experiencing this evangelism, this drawing and wooing into the love and presence of God.

I invite you to join me this next month in spending time contemplating how we are being evangelized, being drawn by the love of God. How does that show up? What does it feel like? Where are the places in our current lives where we long for the love

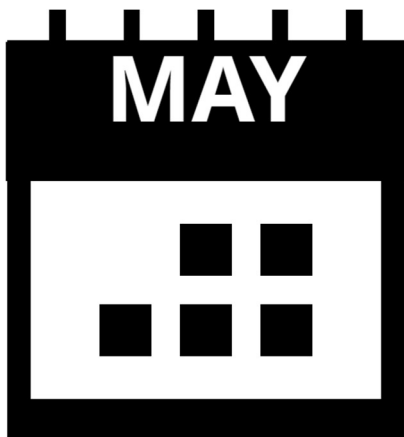
of God to heal us, to offer us re-creation? Consider jotting down some notes or journaling a bit on this experience, and next month we will wonder together about how a deep experience of God's love compels us to share that experience.

Grateful to experience the love of God with you,
Andrea

ANNUAL GIVING GUIDE

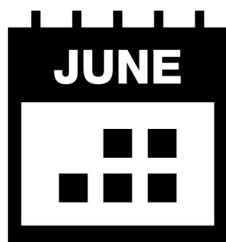
Here you will find monthly ideas for approaching your annual giving campaign throughout the entire year. Looking for the full year guide, find it here: [Stewardship Annual Giving Guide](#).

In May and June...



In **May**, consider different ways of story-sharing:

- Write an article about how last year's campaign went and give an introduction to this next campaign. What went well? What was funded? Why was their gift valuable to mission?
- Begin thinking of people who might be willing to share their own stories of how contributing to your congregation's mission has impacted them.
- Send out First Quarter thank you letters to all donors confirming pledge and amounts paid and still due. Be sure to remind folks that you all fund mission together, and what that looks like in your congregation.



In **June**, build on the story-sharing momentum from May and more:

- Coach your Story Sharers in how to share how contributing to your congregation's mission has impacted them and plan where and how they'll share their stories.
- Consider planning a campaign kick-off event. Consider a meal where the congregation (and beyond!) is invited to hear more about how you are collectively funding your mission! Consider menu, volunteers, event plan, budget, and designate an event leader.

BISHOP'S CALENDAR



Upcoming Bishop's Visitations for 2024

May

- 5 - Holy Spirit, Sandpoint, ID
- 12 - St. Paul's, Walla Walla, WA
- 19 - St. John's Cathedral, Spokane, WA

June

- 2 - Grace Church, Dayton, WA
- 9 - St. Timothy's, Yakima, WA