



## Compassionate. Challenging. Inclusive.

Monthly Newsletter

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### Sovereignty and the Earth

by Pastor Gina

*Long ago, in the time before all days, before the creation of all things, the one who is known as the Word was there face to face with the Great Spirit. This Word fully represents Creator and shows us who he is and what he is like. He has always been there from the beginning for the Word and Creator are one and the same.*

This is the translation of John 1:1-2 from the First Nations Version of the New Testament – an indigenous translation. You might recall these verses starting with, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...”, one of my favorite verses in all of scripture as it very poetically and beautifully connects my faith and beliefs around the person of Jesus Christ with creation – the land on which we live, the environment in which we are surrounded, and all the peoples and animals of the world. This verse breathes life – gives Scripture and the earth on which we live a heartbeat.

So, when I read the First Nations Version of this verse, that image of life and being connected to creation in a deeper way was only ignited further, giving words and imagery to something that I’ve had trouble knowing how to express. Being a beautiful, uniquely created child of God is a core part of my identity as a Christian. And knowing and feeling that connection between my spirit and the earth only deepens my understanding of the God I know and love.

Though this idea is still relatively new to me – and I believe to many of us who live in North America – this spiritual connection between the earth, each other, and God the Creator is one that is not new to Native Americans who have called this place home for centuries before Europeans came and claimed it as their own, taking the land by violence and force, trying to eradicate them not only as people, but eradicate their culture and traditions as well.

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### Blessing of the Animals Sunday, October 1st at noon

At Holy Spirit Lutheran Church

We believe we are called by the Holy Spirit to proclaim and embody the compassionate, challenging, and inclusive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit's annual Blessing of the Animals takes place on Sunday, October 1st at noon, on the front steps. Join us – with your furry, finned, hoofed or many-footed friends (real or stuffed!) to celebrate St. Francis’ love of all creation and remember our call to be faithful stewards of the earth and all its creatures. This short worship service (about 15 minutes) offers prayers, scripture readings, and a time of individual blessing for pets. A freewill offering will be taken to benefit Homeward Pets. *Praise the Lord, wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds – praise the Lord! – Psalm 148:10.*



## Pastor's Letter (continued)

It is because of their connection to the land – to Mother Earth and all that dwells therein – that we have much to learn from indigenous peoples about how to be good stewards of it, and to be good “neighbors” to each other.

As human beings throughout history, our track record of taking care of the earth has not been great. We have reaped more than we have sown. We have destroyed entire ecosystems. We have poisoned our air, and streams, rivers, lakes, and seas for our own gain, disrupting the balance of life so much that we now have a world-wide crisis on our hands. How did we get here, to this place where we are actively destroying the life of our planet, and ironically killing ourselves in the process?

Perhaps part of the reason comes from our understanding of sovereignty – this idea that we are the supreme power and authority over all things, and therefore we have the right to take whatever we want, when we want, and use it for our own purposes.

In July of 2022, National Geographic magazine chose to highlight the many ways in which Native Nations are reclaiming their lands and ways of life. And across the many articles and stories written on this topic, the thing that connected them all was the various tribes’ understanding of sovereignty. When asked, “What does sovereignty mean to you?”, here were some of the responses:

“Sovereignty is having access to all of ourselves.”

“Language is part of who we are, and so who we are is trying to relearn our language and regrow as a community.”

“Sovereignty is the right for us to decide what we want to become.”

“It’s brought me on a path that’s leading me towards being grounded, being more connected with the earth.”

Did you notice that none of these responses even remotely reflect the idea of supreme power and authority? For indigenous peoples who have cared for this land for thousands of years, sovereignty is about preserving the earth, their traditions and culture passed down from generations, and securing a future for their descendants.

This is the image and message that I believe God the Creator would want us to have with regards to Creation. We are to foster, care for, honor, and respect the light and heartbeat of God found not only in humanity but in our created world itself. That is our call as children of the Creator God, reflected in the Word, Jesus Christ, and led by the Great Spirit that connects us all.

Peace,  
Pastor Gina



## Backyard Block Party Recap

What a party! Sunday, September 17th started as a grey and cloudy day; but just in time, right about 1pm, the sun came out and our Backyard Block Party kicked into high gear. Big thanks to Mike Murphy for grilling up our delicious main dishes; to Steve Montague and *Boris Can Dance* for providing fantastic live music; to volunteers and staff for organizing bouncy houses, lawn games, a balloon artist, and to all who came with potluck dishes, ready to dance!

From 1-3pm, 200+ folks gathered from HSLC and the surrounding neighborhood to enjoy food, music, dancing, and games together. This annual tradition has grown each year and is a wonderful way to kick off our fall programs. If you missed this year, make sure to look for details when fall 2024 comes around!



## Way to Live Midweek Adult Study

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

*Way to Live* is back!

Early Christians referred to their lives of discipleship not as an institution, but an activity: "The Way." Following Jesus was less about getting things right, and more about the practices, actions, and activities that make up daily life. They didn't call this life, "The Only Way," as if others had to be wrong simply by default. They did, however, try to live intentionally as a community of generous, compassionate, justice-seeking people trying to walk in the same way, a similar path, as Jesus.

In many ways, that's what we are still doing; trying to walk in Jesus' way. But it takes time, and community, and a space to ask questions and wrestle with the answers together. That's the hope of *Way to Live* our weekly Wednesday night gathering from 7-8pm, beginning October 4th. Pastor Katy leads this opportunity to build community and relationship while thinking, talking, and struggling together with what it means to be part of Jesus' way of life here and now. This year we'll look at Indigenous history and spirituality; a deep dive into the gospel of Mark; the problem of Christian nationalism; and reading theology alongside black voices, just to name a few. There's also opportunity for you to help shape the topics we take on: what do you want to wrestle with together?

Register at [hslckirkland.org](https://hslckirkland.org) under Programs --> Adult Education. If you have any questions, email Pastor Katy ([pastorkaty@hslckirkland.org](mailto:pastorkaty@hslckirkland.org)). The class is free and childcare is available (please register for childcare so we can plan accordingly). Looking forward to seeing you there!

## Crossways with Pastor Mike

begins Sunday, October 1st

Ever had reading the entire Bible on your bucket list? Let Crossways and Pastor Mike Anderson be your guide. This two-year program, including participants from around the country, begins October 1st with an introduction to Genesis, and continues all the way through the Bible. Pre-recorded lectures are sent via email on Sundays, and an optional Thursday Zoom conversation follows to discuss the week's lesson with Pastor Mike and others. This academic study works well for those with previous Bible experience and those who are brand new to study. Pastor Mike retired from full-time ministry at HSLC in 2021 and has led this study for 30+ years, providing new insights, perspectives, and approaches to the biblical story for hundreds of people. For more information and to register, visit our website at [hslckirkland.org/crossways](https://hslckirkland.org/crossways). Questions? Contact Pastor Mike at [pastormike@hslckirkland.org](mailto:pastormike@hslckirkland.org).

## CROSSWAYS



## Vance Blackfox - Americans and the Church:

### Working Towards Truth and Healing

Saturday, October 14th | 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Registration is now open and we are excited to welcome Vance Blackfox, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and the ELCA director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations. He will be leading a one-day seminar at HSLC about the history and struggles of Native American peoples, as well as conversations around working towards healing relationships with indigenous peoples and learning from them about their relationship to Mother Earth. The seminar is from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm and includes lunch. This event is open to the entire synod – all are welcome! We are asking for a donation of \$25 per person, but scholarships are available, so don't let cost dissuade you from coming! You can donate when you register, or on the day of the event via cash, check, or credit card. Register today via the QR code! For more information, contact Pastor Gina Herman at [pastorgina@hslckirkland.org](mailto:pastorgina@hslckirkland.org).



QR code to scan to register  
for Vance Blackfox

## Music Makings this Month in Worship

Check out below when the various choirs and ensembles of HSLC are offering music this month. We'll see you in worship!



### October 1st

Spirit Ringers, 9:30 am and 11:00 am

### October 8th

Chancel Choir, 9:30 am and 11:00 am

Joyful Ringers, 9:30 am

Rejoicing Ringers, 9:30 am and 11:00 am

### October 15th

Chancel Choir, 9:30 am and 11:00 am

### October 22nd

Duets with Arief Abraham and John Sparkman

### October 29th

Chancel Choir, Spirit Ringers, Lorica quartet and Brass Ensemble join forces to celebrate Reformation at 9:30 am and 11:00 am.

Consider wearing **red** and singing out to celebrate the always-reforming and ever-refining fire of the Spirit!

## A Note of Transition from John Sparkman

This month, the music ministries at Holy Spirit will begin a period of transition. For a number of years, I have been considering relocation to be closer to my parents as they age. I am an only child with parents now in their 80's and this, combined with the ever-growing, exorbitant cost of living in the Seattle area, it has increasingly become clear that my partner Brent and I would need to eventually move.

Accordingly this summer, an opportunity that has felt quite Spirit-led has opened to me, and my final Sunday at Holy Spirit will be Reformation Sunday, October 29th. For the past 13 years, it has been my profound joy to contribute to and to guide the music and worship life of HSLC's gifted, generous, and faith-filled community. It's been an honor to seek to proclaim and embody the all-encompassing love of Christ with you all. We've created many meaningful and profound worship services and music events together, we've played way more notes together than any mathematician could ever calculate, and along the way we've made many valuable memories and relationships that I hope will continue, albeit in a new way, as we make this transition together.

In November, I will begin serving St. Philip Lutheran Church in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This transition will put me less than 2 hours driving to both parents in NC, rather than a full day or an overnight on an airplane (or two). This will enable me to no longer be absent as things change and develop over the coming years, while continuing in the vocation to which God continues to call me. I'll also be able to go to a proper family Christmas celebration on the actual holiday, something I've not done since leaving North Carolina in 2002.

You may not be aware, but the Holy Spirit community has helped me to both grow professionally and to heal in innumerable profound ways personally, too. I am forever thankful for how much you have collectively helped my development into a better person over my time with you all, and my deep love and appreciation for this community will continue even at my new distance.

I appreciate your prayers during this time of change and opportunity and look so forward to seeing the exciting new chapter God is planning for the music ministries of Holy Spirit.

In love,  
Jds

*Note: The Personnel Committee is already working to ensure a smooth transition with John's departure. They are actively identifying interim folks to help with the various choirs and Sunday morning worship. Longer term they will be working with a committee to interview potential candidates for John's position.*

## Interested in Becoming a Member?

We love to welcome new members into the life of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church! We are offering the following opportunity this fall:

### **New Member Class (part 1)—Saturday, October 7th; 9:00 am-11:00 am**

Pastor Katy leads a study of the values, theology, and mission of HSLC.

### **New Member Class (part 2)—Saturday, October 21st; 9:00 am-11:00 am**

We share some of the ways to get involved at HSLC.

### **New Members Received—Sunday, October 22nd**

All new members are welcomed into the life of this community during each of the worship services.

Childcare is available. If you'd like to sign up, email the church office at [office@hslckirkland.org](mailto:office@hslckirkland.org). If you have questions, speak with Pastor Katy.

## Centering Prayer

Tuesday, October 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th via Zoom  
from 7:00 to 8:30 pm

Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer - both a relationship with the Divine and a discipline to foster that relationship.

You are invited to explore the practice of Centering Prayer and its three supportive prayer forms in four Zoom sessions from 7:00-8:30 pm on Tuesdays: October 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th. Many resources and much encouragement will be provided.

To register for the class, contact Christina Brugman at [cebrug@gmail.com](mailto:cebrug@gmail.com). Questions are always welcome!

## Trunk or Treat

Sunday, October 29th | 4:00—5:30 pm

We'll gather in the main parking lot for trunk-or-treat. Families are also invited to decorate and host a trunk or parking space to make the experience even more fun! Signups available soon - contact Becky at [children@hslckirkland.org](mailto:children@hslckirkland.org) if you wish to host a space!



## NWWA Synod Event—LiVing Our Values: How to Deal with Difference

Saturday, November 4th | 10am-3pm

Trinity Episcopal Church in Everett

The Northwest Washington Synod, in partnership with the Strategic Team for Authentic Diversity, is offering "LiVing Our Values: How to Deal with Difference", an anti-racism educational event (which is also part of the LiVE initiative) for ELCA rostered leaders, church members, and professional church staff. Cost is \$100 per person (scholarships available), and includes lunch (choices available when you register). Participants will use the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess and set their own goals in this work. There will be time for group learning, individual reflection, and affinity group breakouts.

Registration is open now, and will close on October 26th. If you would like to apply for a scholarship, please email Susan at [Susan@lutheransnw.org](mailto:Susan@lutheransnw.org) by October 23rd (and BEFORE you register).

After you register, if you have indicated you need to complete the IDI, you will be sent a link to complete it online. Bring these results (or results from a previously completed IDI) to the event.

For more information and to register, scan the QR code to the left.



QR code to scan to register for LiVing Our Values

## Hold Me Tight Couples Workshop: Build Connection in Your Relationship

October 21st and 22nd at Rosehill Community Center, Mukilteo

Join Marcia Erickson Bates of Lutheran Counseling Network and her colleague Kristin Nielsen for a transformative couples workshop. Identify negative patterns that get in the way of your relationship, and learn new ways to communicate and build connection.

To learn more and to register, visit [northwestcouples.com](http://northwestcouples.com).

## Library



Holy Spirit Lutheran

**Mission:**  
To expand the intersection of intellect and spirituality while holding physical space in our busy world for prayer, introspection and study.

## Library News

Indigenous Peoples Day will be celebrated on October 9 this year, and we are fortunate to welcome Vance Blackfox, ELCA Director of Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations, later that week. In preparation for his visit, or simply to learn more about Indigenous history, life, and spiritualities, the HSLC library team invites you to check out these great reads!

Pastor Katy has just begun reading *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Kimmerer. Pastor Gina is reading *Calling for a Blanket Dance* by Oscar Hokeah. Looking for a great children's book? Check out *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom, or *The Whale Child* by Keith and Chenoa Egawa. Vance Blackfox recommends *Jacksonland*, by Steve Inskeep, as an excellent history of how President Andrew Jackson set in motion the seizure of tens of millions of acres from native peoples. *An Indigenous People's History of the U.S. for Young People*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz is great for any age, and tells many stories our traditional history books have ignored. Soon to be a film, *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann recounts the murders of Osage people in Oklahoma, in the early 1920's, and the role of the newly created FBI in the case.

In addition, the ELCA's *Truth and Healing* movement is offering numerous resources free of charge, including Zoom classes on Indigenous history, land acknowledgments and land back movements, Indian Boarding School history, and much more. Visit [elca.org](http://elca.org) to find out more.

## Vintage Spirits - Oktoberfest

Tuesday, October 17th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Herrs und Frauleins! Don your lederhosen und dirndls and join the Vintage Spirits on Tuesday, October 17th. We'll meet at 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall for LUNCH of brats, wursts, sauerkraut, German potato salad, apple strudel, and other traditional German foods. Enjoy conversation and good food and music as we anticipate the fall season! Questions? Contact Deirdre Staudt at [deirdre.staudt@gmail.com](mailto:deirdre.staudt@gmail.com).

## Retirement Open House for Deacon Dianne Johnson

Sunday, October 29th | 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

First Lutheran Church in Bothell

The NWWA Synod Director for Evangelical Mission, Deacon Dianne Johnson, is retiring on October 31st. Her enthusiasm, wisdom, creativity, and compassion will be greatly missed. You are invited to an open house at First Lutheran Church in Bothell on Sunday, October 29th, from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm to give thanks for her many years of service. Questions? Contact Susan at [Susan@lutheransnw.org](mailto:Susan@lutheransnw.org).

## Social Justice Committee: Housing and Inclusion

"My friend has a child with special needs, where can we get help?"

Even after 6 years of retirement, people at Holy Spirit know I managed Bridge Disability Ministries. I still advocate for agencies supporting people living with disabilities in my focus on the Social Justice committee, Inclusion team. So it is not unusual for a member of Holy Spirit to ask the question above. In a recent conversation, the child was in eastern Washington, yet I had an answer. Washington Autism Alliance (WAA) is a statewide non-profit with a great history serving families in many ways. They are one of the non-profit organizations supported by the Social Justice committee. Before COVID, Holy Spirit partnered with WAA to provide *Respite Days* (see photo to the right).

If you or a friend needs help with ASD/DD, visit WAA's website at [washingtonautismalliance.org](http://washingtonautismalliance.org).

WAA extends access to healthcare, education, and services for people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD's) and related intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Washington State, helping children and adults with ASD thrive.

The 3 Levels of WAA's Targeted Approach:

**INDIVIDUAL** - Provide direct legal services to ensure health benefits and education services so families can thrive today.

**INSTITUTIONAL** - Targeted advocacy training to improve healthcare and education institution responses so that families can self-advocate and partner with institutions for solutions.

**SYSTEM** - Advocate for system-wide reform to achieve long-term and far reaching impact.

In this third area, under the leadership of its founder, Arzu Forogh, WAA has advocated for legislation that has changed state law, spearheaded legal action against health insurers who deny ASD coverage, and educated parents in their rights to obtain IEP support in schools.

No one can "cure" autism. But as a proud grandfather of 18-year-old J.T., I can state that with early intervention and appropriate care, a child can advance and grow to fit in to this "neurotypical" world.

For more information about Social Justice's Housing and Inclusion focus, contact Jack Staudt at [jackmstaudt@gmail.com](mailto:jackmstaudt@gmail.com).





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**October 2023 HSLC Newsletter**

**Return Service Requested**

**Worship on Sundays - 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM**

Childcare available at 9:30 am and 11:00 am  
Livestreaming at 9:30 am

**Go Paperless!**

If you'd like to reduce waste and not receive a paper copy of this monthly newsletter, please let us know. A digital copy of this monthly newsletter comes out with our weekly eNews updates, and is also available via our website. Contact [office@hslckirkland.org](mailto:office@hslckirkland.org) to update your communication preferences. Thank you!

**Do you get the weekly eNews?**

Did you know we also put out a weekly newsletter via e-mail? It shares the latest news and announcements for Holy Spirit, including this newsletter electronically. If you're not already subscribed, please contact the office at [office@hslckirkland.org](mailto:office@hslckirkland.org) to have your e-mail address added to the weekly eNews distribution list. Thank you!