

I-K Lutheran

Where God is doing new things

April 2018

Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

[Ephesians 3:20-21, NRSV]

I suspect that one of the overlooked gifts of the resurrection of Jesus is a new and unbound imagination.

We are told that after Jesus' death on that fateful Friday long ago his most energetic followers simply returned to their lives before Jesus. It was as if the horizon of their vision shrunk back to what they had known before, the way things used to be.

But then, as the risen Jesus began to appear to them – whispering peace, offering hope, empowering them and sending them into the world as God has sent Jesus – it began to dawn on them that they were living in a new and heretofore unimaginable world. They began to see that world and their own lives after the resurrection of Christ were wildly different from what they were day before that first Easter Sunday. And they began to embrace the new life, the new world, that was far beyond anything that they could ever have imagined, even in their most inspired moments of following Jesus.

As it turned out God is, indeed, able to accomplish abundantly far more than all they or we could dare ask or begin to imagine.

The resurrection of Jesus cracks open our imaginations that are limited by darkened tombs and immovable stones to see in the early morning light of God's creative, death-defeating love new possibilities and almost unrecognizable new life rising to greet us.

The resurrection of Jesus expands our vision, vision that is so narrowly focused on and bound to the way things are or once were, to ponder anew the unexpected, unimaginable breadth of what the almighty can do.

When we are paralyzed by loss or death of any sort...

when our vision is limited to what has been or is blurred by anxiety or fear about the unknown future lurking around the corner...

when we cannot see a clear way forward and are tempted to despair or to give up or to return to ineffective, life-denying certainty or routine...

the resurrection of Jesus unbinds us – and our tomb-bound imaginations – and sets us free.

Trusting in the new life that burst from the tomb, our imaginations – as communities and as individuals – are unbound to welcome ways of being church, ways of engaging the world, ways of walking with others that we could never imagine or for which we would never think to ask.

Surrendering our imaginations to the risen One, we can let go of what our limited vision demands that we do to preserve stale realities and, in the power of the Spirit, to embrace new, life-giving realities not of our own making or imagination, but of God's.

Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. May it be ever so.

Bishop Bill Gafkjen



God's Love from Indonesia to Indiana-Kentucky

Sister Nurhayati Silalahi, a deaconess of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), visited in our synod February 16-25, 2018. The HKBP, a Lutheran church body with more than 4.5 million members, is one of our synod's two global companions. Sister Nur serves as the Director of the HKBP's HIV AIDS Ministry.

Two events were held in conjunction with the Campaign for the ELCA and ELCA World Hunger to raise money for the ministry which Sister Nur directs. These events were held at Christ in Jeffersontown, KY, and Christ the Savior in Fishers, IN.

Sister Nur was able to experience congregational life and worship in several of our synod's congregations and was able to visit a number of different social service agencies and get a feel for the state of Indiana and the commonwealth of Kentucky.

Sister Nur met with officials from the Ryan White HIV Programs at the Marion County (IN) Health Department and the University of Louisville. She was able to take part in a peer educator program for teenagers, toured St.

Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis with Pastor Doug Givan, and spend time at Lutheran Child and Family Services. The food pantry and other ministries of Grace and Glory Lutheran Church in Goshen, Kentucky, offered insight into programs addressing food insecurity. Sister Nur participated in the Northeast Indiana Conference Chrism Liturgy at Epiphany in Fort Wayne. She also joined Bishop Bill Gafkjen at the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington Convention in Winchester, KY. Sister Nur enjoyed lunch with some deaconesses in

the Indianapolis area and dinner with Synod Council member Matthew Pope. She spent time with Pastor Bimen Limbong and his family. She visited with Pastor Teri Ditslear at Roots of Life in Noblesville and worshipped at Pilgrim Lutheran in Carmel, IN.

In addition to these official events, Sister Nur also got to visit the top of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis and had an amazing behind-the-scenes tour of Churchill Downs with Ken Boehm.

Sister Nur's presence with us reminded us of our connection in the body of Christ with our sisters and brothers in Indonesia and around the world. We heard about the life changing work that she does and were humbled by the love with which she cares for others. If you would like to support her ministry, visit www.elca.org/donate and give to ELCA World Hunger and indicate the gift is for "HIV AIDS Ministry-Indonesia."



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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