

## Visiting Mountains



Shirley Gangstad  
Synod  
Vice President

Greetings!

I journeyed with the Good Earth Village group to Holden Village in Chelan, Washington. While riding home on Amtrak in the midst of Montana, one of our group said to me, “Now that we’ve left the mountains behind and are down on the plains, I feel that we are really going home. I guess I’m a plains person!”

Mountaintops are wonderful places to visit – magnificent, inspiring, awesome; but we can’t stay there, neither spiritually nor literally. We have to come back to the plains, back to ordinary everyday life. We can savor the memory of the mountaintop; we can use the inspiration of the mountaintop to motivate and direct our lives; we can share the experience and encourage others to “go for it,” but we must live on the plains.

---

**We have to come  
back to the plains,  
back to ordinary  
everyday life.**

---

Our group attended a “Sacred Time, Holy Ground” conference that focused on making our theology, our worship, and our ways of life inclusive: not just inclusive of all people – we already know and understand that necessity. Inclusive here meant the earth and all creation. In a nutshell, just as we pray for the poor and marginalized and forgotten people, so we should pray for the ravaged and overused and underappreciated earth.

You may be hearing bits and pieces from this conference in your congregations or spreading through the synod. We were privileged to attend a wonderful conference in a magnificent place. Holden Village is unlike any place I have ever been. In some ways it is both the best of our church and the best of humanity in a setting that is among the best of creation. While we enjoyed our time, and many wished it could have been longer, it is good to be home and once again busy ourselves with living out our faith. I love going to the mountains, but I guess I’m a plains person, too.

Blessings in Christ,

*Shirley*