

## Let the Holy Spirit Lift You Up

Greetings!

While traveling by car, I heard a snippet of a sermon on the radio. The preacher evidently had two children beside him, one on a chair representing the kingdom of heaven and one on the floor representing the world. He asked the child on the chair to lift the other child up onto the chair. Not possible! Then he asked the child on the floor to pull the one on the chair down. This task was easily done.

The obvious lesson—it is not us but the Holy Spirit who lifts people into the kingdom of heaven. The equally obvious second lesson—the world is always trying to pull us down and away from the kingdom of heaven—and it is an easy task.

All of our Christian beliefs are counter-cultural. What we hold dear, the world scorns; the standards we live by, the world jeers; striving for love, justice, mercy and care of the poor and marginalized is an overwhelming task and the world laughs at us for even trying—besides “those” people don’t matter anyway.

We Christians know this attitude of the world is a fact of life, and that is why we pray for support and guidance and comfort. As our church year celebrates the ending of the season of Easter and moves into Pentecost, Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit and then sends us the Holy Spirit. Each of us has stated our belief that “I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him.” But the Holy Spirit calls, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps us and the whole Christian church in true faith, forgives our sins and gives us eternal life.

Knowing that the world is going to try to pull us down and diminish us, we need pray for guidance and then be willing to dream BIG. Half of a big dream accomplished is better than all of a paltry dream. Besides, who knows how far we can go with the Holy Spirit surging along with us. We can have a Minnesota without poverty! We can wipe out malaria! We can feed the hungry! We can change the world! God’s work. Our hands!

Blessings in Christ,

*Shirley*



Shirley Gangstad  
Synod Vice President

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By Rev. Jay Dahlvang  
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Faith Advocate



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Use them for:

- Bible conversations at circle meetings, youth events, text studies, or at a new gathering started in your community to grow in God’s grace and calling.
- As an opening for council or other meetings in your congregation.
- To enhance your worship experience as you anticipate the following Sunday.
- Family conversations.
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- For personal devotion and edification in the Word.

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