

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP MAAS

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE



This month's newsletters share their theme with the Nebraska Synod Assembly. It's a theme that both reminds us of our baptism ("Let your light so shine before others...") and calls us to discipleship ("No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand"). It's a theme about both identity and mission.

You'll note that among the many articles and notices is information about some significant dates this month. There's the Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine (the nine African-American victims shot and killed by a white supremacist while they were at a Bible study) on June 17; Juneteenth (celebration of the final end of slavery in the U.S.) on June 19; and all of June is LGBT Pride Month.

Lifting up such dates may not seem an obvious connection to a newsletter like this one, but it makes good sense. Each of these dates invites those in the minority to let their light shine, to celebrate who they are as children of God and what makes them distinctive—and invites those of us in the majority to consider how we can keep from hiding our own light under a bushel through thoughtlessly or intentionally ignoring, overlooking or outright disdaining the presence and the contributions of others.

It's clear that throughout his ministry, Jesus made his way to the margins, there to engage in fellowship with, teach, listen, heal and welcome those whose lights were hidden by cultural norms and everyday biases. He showed them that God created them as lights to shine, even when others tried to hide them under a bushel basket. And he invited his followers to let their own lights shine brighter by practicing the broad, deep, gracious welcome that he demonstrated. Ours is a church dedicated to the practice of such grace: it is "the welcome place," and we take that welcome seriously.

Take the time to note these dates, to learn more about what they mean, and to use available ELCA resources (see below) to commemorate them appropriately in worship and

in your private devotion. Learning and acting is how we lift the bushel basket from our own life and shine more brightly with the light of Christ, made ours in baptism and glowing within us by the power of Christ's Spirit.

Go. Learn. Live.

And let your light shine!

ELCA resources for

- LGBT Pride Month: <https://www.elca.org/lgbtq>.
- Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine: https://elca.org/emanuelnine?_ga=2.246087622.371350317.1653072375-565464105.1598997373
- Juneteenth: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Juneteenth_observance_0619.pdf?_ga=2.142660215.371350317.1653072375-565464105.1598997373