

FINAL DRAFT

2019 REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Celebrating Renewal: Katherine von Bora Luther—Faith in the Home

We are in a time of great change in the church. As Presiding Bishop Eaton says, “We are not closing. But we are changing.” This is the first mark of a great leader. She defines reality.

This is different from a statement by one of our pastors in a public meeting. “I don’t know why we are worrying about these things. The ELCA will be closed by 2050.” That pastor is not a leader. Elizabeth Eaton is. She defines reality in a way that is filled with hope and promise. We give thanks that we have a leader that defines reality with hope and promise.

Leaders are also the servants of the people. They know that they are called to serve the people and that the people are not called to serve the leader. Leaders serve the people.

Leaders thank the people. Because of life experience, we need to hear thank yous five times in order to make up for the one negative in our lives. Five times. Leaders know that if they are to lead people into the future, they simply must genuinely thank the people that they serve. Five times more than the negative that they hear elsewhere. Thank you.

Again, Bishop Eaton, “We are not dying. We are changing.” I recently heard a presentation on “Disruptive Innovation.” The presenter was from the medical world. He talked about the disruption that is taking place in medicine by Amazon, Wal-Mart, Google and Apple. Organizations that have had nothing to do with medicine, but they do know about data. The data on you will drive the medical care in the future. (i.e. Centers for Excellence) Wal-Mart flies their employees around the country to receive the finest medical care. What have they found? Thirty percent of procedures recommended locally are not needed. I asked the doctor why. Local needs to know the whole body, head to toe. Cleveland Center needs to know one organ at a time. Of course, they see things that generalist cannot. This is a “Disruptive Innovation.”

What are the disruptive innovations for the church? I don’t know but I am confident that they will come from outside the organization. And we need not be afraid because we know of the ultimate disruptive innovation: the pregnancy of Mary, the birth of Jesus (Illegal you know. Both Mary and Joseph were to be stoned to death.) Holy disruption I guess you would say.

Fast forward 16 centuries to a monk reading scripture and defying the Pope and a nun leaving the place of Holy Safety to change the definition of marriage, family and the world.

Holy disruption—the angel said, “Do not be afraid.” The angel was right then and is still right today. Be not afraid.

The faith created by God in the safe place of home and church is eternal you know. That is sufficient for the day.

Thank you to Judy Converse, staff, Ruth.