A Message from Bishop Smylie

Between our 2016 diocesan convention and this year’s convention we have been invited to notice and discover the “Wows” around us in our congregations. On August 21st, the day titled by the news as “The Great American Eclipse,” Wyoming was privileged to experience a cosmic wow! More than a year ago the Bishop of New York asked if he could come to our house in Casper for the eclipse. At the time I asked him, “When is the eclipse?” He and his wife did come and stay with us. He loves astronomy and it was a pleasure to have them with us, and by the end of the visit I had nicknamed him “Professor.” His explanations of what we may want to watch for made the experience of watching the eclipse all the better. We saw the diamond ring, the solar flares, the 360-degree sunset and totality. Immediately after the solar eclipse’s few moments of totality he marveled at the precision of the universe, while also reflecting on the imprecision and chaos that often fills our life on “this fragile earth, our island home,” as it is described in Eucharistic Prayer C in the Book of Common Prayer.

As I look around the 97,818 square miles we know as Wyoming and our congregations that dot our landscape I am in awe of the impact you, the people of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Wyoming, are making upon our local communities and beyond. When I stop to consider the extraordinary commitment visible throughout our congregations it creates in my heart an even greater and far more sustainable and lasting wow than the solar eclipse. That magnificent moment of totality only lasted a little more than two minutes, but your faithful presentation of God’s love is a gift that lasts for eternity. You, with your abiding love of God, with your love of one another and with the love of God visible within you, are my wow!

Many of us will come together in Lander for our 2017 diocesan convention. Banners representing visible wows are being made throughout the diocese to be placed around the main hall where we will be meeting, as well as being carried in procession at our final worship service on Ethete Circle. These banners will point to the outward and visible signs of grace among us and around us. While we celebrate the stories that each of these banners represent let us also rejoice in the inward and spiritual truth that God’s love is around us, within us and is made manifest through us, lighting up the world with the glory of God! WOW!

+John