

# Around the Synod

## View of the Sound

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The name of this little column is "view of the sound" because out my office window is Sitka Sound, or at least a bit of the Eastern Channel. Often during the summer, a visitor will pop notice my wonderful view on the way to the restroom and comment on it. "Great view". "Wish I had a view like that", visiting pastors will often say. I am lucky. Every once and a while I like to share what I actually see in the Sound.

Bench — There is a bench across Harbor Drive that is a very good place for people to sit, rest, and look out at the ocean. All sorts of people sit there. Not many people stop there in the winter when the rain is pouring down. Sometimes though I will see men who are just looking for a place to lay their burden down for a moment stop there, take off their backpacks and sit awhile. Metaphorically it is good to have a place to lay down what weighs heavy on us especially in the midst of the gloom and rain. **Do you have such a place?** In the summer of course, it is mostly our visitors that stop and gaze across the water. Resting their bodies, resting their minds, letting thoughts float along on a wave. **How often do we locals forget to stop and rest our bodies and minds, and let thoughts flow like ocean waves?** For a few days in a row I saw a young man at the bench simply dancing. Didn't hear the music, didn't see any earbuds or headphones through which he could have been listening to music. He started to walk across the bridge and then would suddenly put a few dance steps in his stroll. It was just dance for the sake of joy! **When was the last time you did something just for the joy of it?**

Mountains — Across the way are the mountains in all their magnificence. I am reminded of Psalm 104 where the mountains are described as rising up and the water flowing down to create the sea around them. The mountains are so beautiful and strong to behold. They engender courage and humility in me at the same time. But there are many days in the winter when I cannot see those mountains. Fog, rain, clouds, obscure the view. And yet I know that they are still there. **From where do you gain your strength, courage, and humility? When you cannot see the source do you know that it is still there?**

Whale spout — Speaking of things seen and not seen...way off in the distance, in a sliver of a view between two islands, I often see whales spouting. Well actually, I just see the spout, not the whale. This experience makes me think of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath. Remember when Jesus' followers were hiding out in the upper room after his death? He came to them right through the locked door and breathed on them saying, "do not be afraid" and "receive the Holy Spirit." We too receive the Holy Spirit, but we do not see Jesus. But like when we know there is a whale when we see the breath, know that because we have received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the source — Jesus is around. **So next time you see a whale spout maybe you will think about how God is inspiring you in our life.**