**Practice #5: ACT TOGETHER**

**A Funny (and humbling) Story…**

*By Rev. Solveig Nilsen-Goodin*

It was Saturday morning. I had made the commitment to gather signatures for PCEF at our annual gathering of Oregon Synod Lutherans, which was happening in SE Portland. I couldn't actually go to the whole gathering, but my plan was to be there when registration opened and stay until opening worship. That way I wouldn't be taking people away from the meetings, or distracting them once the assembly began. Great plan, right?

Right. Except for one fatal flaw: I was going alone.

And because I was going alone, and therefore wasn't accountable to meet anyone else there...the excuses started as soon as I woke up:

*Gosh, I didn't sleep well last night, I think I need to sleep some more...*

*Oh, my son is having a birthday party later today and I don't really want to leave him home alone this morning...*

*How many signatures will I really be able to gather there anyway...*

*Maybe going to Salt and Light Lutheran tomorrow after worship is a better idea than going to this event today...*

I'm not kidding. Lying in bed as the minutes passed (making it less and less likely that I would actually get there for any reasonable amount of time) I literally started watching myself go through these mental gymnastics to find excuses for not going to gather signatures!

WHY??? I can't say I was nervous or scared (or even that tired, truth be told). I actually have no idea why all that resistance started showing up within me.

But I do know this: If I had planned to gather signatures WITH someone, no matter how I felt that morning, I would have gotten out of bed and gathered signatures. No drama. No excuses. No mental gymnastics.

But I was going to go alone. So the excuses won. I didn't go.

Now listen, I'm a self-confident and self-motivated person. Though I have never collected signatures for an initiative before, I have been doing various forms of relational organizing and activism work for decades. And more than that, I COACH people in the Practices for Awakening Leadership!

And then BAM! Even with all my experience I fell into the classic trap laid out for us everywhere we turn in our culture of individualism and isolation: I acted alone.

Or, make that, I had PLANNED to act alone. But then when the time came, I didn't act AT ALL.

Our EcoFaith Co-Chair Alison has this quote at the bottom of some of her emails: *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*

Well, my version of that quote is this: *If you want to go AT ALL, go together. If you want to lay in bed all morning and then feel guilty about it all day, plan to go alone!*

**Practice #5: ACT TOGETHER: Consciously engage the power of COLLECTIVE action in the service of God's healing and justice-seeking work for human communities and the whole creation.**

Lesson learned! I guess that's why we call them Practices...because it takes *practice* to shake the culture of individualism and awaken the power of collective action over and over again!