



Broader and Deeper

The Rev. John D. Kautz was elected to Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center's Board of Directors in 2013. He lives in Tucson, Arizona and one of his prized possessions and activities is thirty years of season tickets attending the sold-out University of Arizona Wildcats' basketball games. John D also takes time to travel from Tucson to Carefree and participate in Spirit in the Desert board meetings and programs.

In 2015, he was asked to head up the Board of Director's search committee to find a new executive director; Paul Campbell, who served the retreat center as executive director for 12 years, was retiring. The task was to find a person able to lead the retreat center in its mission of being a place where guests can experience reconciliation, renewal, healing, and transformation.

When John D completed a preliminary phone call with Richard Andersen, Director of Congregational Relations for Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, he turned to his wife, Lynn and said, "I think we've found our new executive director." Face to face interviews confirmed his initial impression and Richard assumed his new duties in January, 2016.

John D is a graduate of Augustana University, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, of Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, and completed post-graduate studies at Luther Seminary. Highlights of his career include six years of campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, 15 years as a campus pastor for students at the University of Arizona, and he retired from pastoral service after twelve years as senior pastor of Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Sun City West, Arizona.

When asked about his vision for Spirit in the Desert, John D said, "I hope for continuing breadth and depth." He is excited that the retreat center is fulfilling its mission of providing welcoming hospitality and programing for people of all walks of life, for those who are part of a faith community, and those who are not. And he believes there is opportunity for deeper collaboration between Spirit in the Desert and congregations who are involved and supportive of the center. He added, "I strongly believe in Spirit in the Desert's unique opportunity to provide renewing retreat experiences."