



Northwest Washington

Synod supplement

An emotional word

By the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, bishop

Evangelism is one of those words that produces emotional responses when people hear it. I have heard people say that they do not evangelize and that this is the pastor's job. Occasionally I hear people say that they need help in knowing what to say. At times in our history evangelism was seen as "Christian sales" (witness the Kennedy Evangelism Program).

The fact is that evangelism is just what the name implies. It is sharing good news. In the context of the church, it is the good news of God's love for us as experienced in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. "God so loves the world ..."

Why do you participate in worship and the activities of the congregation? That is what we are called to share. It is, to paraphrase Martin Luther, one beggar telling another where to find food. We are called by God to give witness to the good news that God is still active in the world and in our lives. This transforming activity of God is what we are to profess.

Occasionally I hear people say that they want to share love in action and are not comfortable with words. I do understand that not everyone likes to stand in front of others and speak. I also know that we have those friends and relatives with whom we share our deepest thoughts and feelings. Do we share our faith feelings with these friends?

We do talk about what is important to us. You have seen pictures of my grandchildren at the last four synod assemblies. You do not have to ask to see them. It is part of who I am. My baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus is also my identity. I believe not on my own, but the Spirit works faith in me and in you. We give witness to this good news.

We live in anxious, even fearful times. There is little good news on CNN or the local channels each night. So the stage has been set for the people of God. We are the evangelists, the speakers of God's good news. □



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Sharing the good news

Our synod created the Evangelism Grant Task Force to distribute one-time funds for evangelism purposes in the ELCA. Through the task force, our synod distributed a total of \$10,000. Contact the following congregations to benefit from their experiences.

Central, Seattle: Identified their mission, created a visual symbol and mailed handouts to communicate their ministry to their neighbors.

Christ, Ferndale: Purchased a church entrance/exit banner.

Edmonds, Edmonds: Used funds to share the Easter story with community children and adults in a nonthreatening way.

Faith, North Lakewood: Sponsored a carnival based on the theme of Jesus' death and resurrection to reach children and their parents and draw them into the life of the congregation.

Grace, Des Moines: Created a three-church outreach partnership to promote *KISS* (Keep Inviting Someone to Something).

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Women from Elizabeth Gregory Home and from University Lutheran Church in Seattle share a meal and community.

Evangelism: A way of life

By the Rev. Ron Moe-Lobeda

With an emphasis on evangelism in this day and age, churches are urged to reach out to those who are unchurched with the good news of Jesus Christ.

At University Lutheran Church, Seattle, evangelism takes on a broader meaning and is epitomized in the ministry of hospitality. Not only is every ULC member encouraged to invite friends, neighbors and acquaintances to worship, each is also asked to welcome any stranger who walks through the doors of the church—and not only on Sunday mornings, but every day of the week.

Demonstrating their chosen calling to evangelism, several years ago ULC members voted overwhelmingly to establish and open a transitional housing ministry, Elizabeth Gregory Home. In addition to this housing for 11 women, in a building across the street from the church, ULC opened a drop-in day center seven days a week for these women as well as any homeless women on

the street.

Congregation members assumed the financial challenge of this ministry, and today they continue to give 18 percent of the funding needed to sustain an annual budget of \$340,000.

Also demonstrating evangelism is the Sanctuary Art Center, a drop-in site for homeless young people who seek a quiet respite where they can enjoy using their artistic talents. University Street Ministries serves a hot meal at ULC every Monday evening. Most recently, Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church moved its Sunday lunch ministry (a hot meal for more than 350 people) to ULC on an interim basis.

Into the community

Members take the good news of God's reign to other places of ministry. They serve lunch at Central Lutheran Church in Seattle every Friday in November to more than 120 people. Several teams of ULC

members serve breakfast at the Young Adult Shelter in the University District every Saturday morning throughout the year.

Each year a growing contingent of ULC members visit Olympia for Faith Advocacy Day in order to proclaim the good news of God's reign as revealed in Jesus Christ to the government officials willing to listen.

As a way to express this good news more formally, ULC chose to be a Greening Congregation, where members strive to encourage one another as well as to establish corporate efforts to care for our planet Earth.

As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, ULC demonstrates a welcome to and affirmation of everyone in our community.

Members of ULC are currently in the process of deciding whether or not to become an Advocating Congregation to reflect the ministry of advocacy that is already happening.

Evangelism has become a way of life for members of ULC, not only in their individual daily lives but in their corporate life together.

This proclamation and demonstration of the good news of God's reign as revealed in Jesus Christ is guided by the congregation's mission statement. It calls upon members "to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth." □

Moe-Lobeda is pastor of University Lutheran Church in Seattle.

Reaching out—bringing together

By Joe Sanders

One August afternoon, a beehive of activity built behind a normally unassuming house near South Evergreen Way in Everett. By that evening, local residents—of all ages, cultures and economic circumstances—were sharing food and conversation, and building a sense of community.

The event was “National Night Out Against Crime.” The house is home to South Everett Neighborhood Center and *Familias Unidas*, two family support centers that Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCS) operates in King and Snohomish counties.

One of the Centers’ most popular and successful annual activities, “National Night Out” gathers neighbors to grow better acquainted and learn about crime prevention, personal safety and community resources. Events, which include food, music and fun family activities, draw hundreds of local residents.

Family Support Centers serve as hubs where local residents create community and work with LCS staff to provide resources and address issues that affect their lives.

“A lot of them just need to talk, sit at a table [and] not go somewhere where they have to take a number,” said Juanita Clifford, program coordinator at South Everett Neighborhood Center. “Families walk away feeling like ‘there is hope’ ... ‘people do care.’ [Many] come back as volunteers and get involved in the community.”

Like many communities across the Northwest, the Centers’ communities have increasingly diverse populations. On any given day, it’s not uncommon to hear Spanish, Rus-

sian and other languages from the Center’s staff or participants.

Nearby Lutheran congregations have “adopted” the Centers, helping to provide financial, in-kind and volunteer support, and some members become involved in center activities. One example is Faith Lutheran Church’s partnership with South Everett Neighborhood Center and *Familias Unidas*.

“We have a variety of activities that we’ve been blessed to be able to do in conjunction with LCS,” said congregation member Bud Alkire, a longtime volunteer. “We provide a food bank, a meal program and we hold a school supply drive. There’s power in working together with an agency like Lutheran Community Services.

“God calls us to serve and to care for our neighbors, and in doing that we not only help those who have needs, but [we] gain and share a real understanding of what God’s love is all about.”

For newly arrived immigrants and long-term residents alike, interaction with the Centers is often their first exposure to the Lutheran church. By reaching out to neighbors in loving service and bringing people together to build community, the Centers provide an active witness to the Lutheran faith. Through outreach, involvement, participation and partnership, LCS Family Support Centers truly “embrace the gifts of all,” spreading the good news and touching the lives of thousands of individuals and families. □

Sanders is director of marketing and communications of Lutheran Community Services Northwest.

To learn more about programs of Lutheran Community Services Northwest, visit www.lcsnw.org.

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Holy Cross, Everett: Purchased a DLP projector to enhance youth ministry and fellowship activities.

Indonesian Lutheran Fellowship, Seattle: Developed an evangelism plan, *Revitalize, Reach Out, Revive*, to reach immigrant communities by using the Indonesian as a case study.

Our Savior’s, Everett and Sno-Isle Cluster: With a prayer workshop, *I’m Praying as Loud as I Can!*, invited people who wonder where God is to share and pray together.

Sammamish Hills, Sammamish: Trained lay leaders to develop and lead gatherings based on three dimensions of Christ’s life: upward relationship with God, inward relationship with other Christians, and outward movement seeking to make a difference in the world.

St. Matthews, Renton: Added another morning session with free breakfast and purchased new games to expand after-school ministry to more than 60 middle school students.

Celebration, Anacortes: Purchased video downloading and streaming tools to make the intellectual resources of moderate and progressive churches available to the public. □