



The Spirit

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News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the
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Jesus, Justice and Jazz by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



37000 youth and advisors gathered in New Orleans, LA, for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering under the theme, *Jesus, Justice and Jazz*. This was my third gathering since I have been in the office of bishop.

Each gathering is unique and each has many

common elements with previous gatherings. This one stood out in that the gathering was only one week rather than the attendees being split up in to two groups, during two different weeks. Seeing people sitting in the upper level of the Superdome was an amazing sight.

New Orleans and the surrounding areas were excited by the presence of these youth. Each group engaged in some type of direct service to the community. These experiences ranged from assembling backpacks for every student in the New Orleans school system, to planting grass in attempt to recover wet lands, to painting murals for the schools.

I was with the group from Holy Spirit, Kirkland as they participated in creating the mural on 2 by 4s that was used in the gathering's closing worship. (The mural will be distributed to Habitat for Humanity Housing projects.) The citizens of New Orleans knew that the Lutherans were present in the form of these orange shirted workers that were scattered over the city.

New Orleans is still recovering from Katrina and Rita. The lower ninth ward is still the symbol

that most of the world sees. I was privileged to be with the folks from Holy Spirit as we toured the 7th ward. This area suffered as much or more as the 9th ward. It is not in the headlines, but the destruction is still visible. Where they broke, the levies have been repaired, but the sections that did not collapse are still as weak as the sections that did. The potential for further damage in this area is very real.

The 207 members of the Northwest Washington Synod who attended the gathering had a variety of experiences. Like all youth gatherings there were moments of disorganization and youthful enthusiasm. It is also clear that those who attended were challenged by speakers, experiences and conversation to "do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with God."

There is much that goes into getting a congregation's youth to such an event. Being with 37,000 other Lutherans is a unique experience. If you had youth who attended, talk with them about the gathering. If a neighboring congregation sent members to New Orleans, invite them to come and share their experience. This was the largest event in New Orleans since the hurricanes. We made headlines for coming to town and doing the work of God. We were the church.

Editor's Note: For photos, news stories and other information about the gathering please visit: www.lutheransnw.org and click on 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering.

Luther And The Hungry Poor

St John United in Seattle is hosting Professor Samuel Torvend for a half-day conference on the Reformation roots of our Lutheran service to the poor: *Luther and the Hungry Poor*. The event will take place from 9 to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21, at St. John United in Seattle.

The event is open to all congregations. Members of St. John are especially encouraging those who work with soup kitchens, food pantries and other community needs to attend. Dr. Torvend is an exciting presenter and did a shortened version of this workshop at PLU Hunger Gathering in February. The event will include two presentations by Dr. Torvend, small group sharing, holy communion and lunch.

Dr. Torvend is author of *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*. It's available on Fortress Press for \$29, Item No: 9780800662387.

Prayer Retreat: Rooted in God's Love

Zion Lutheran in Ferndale will host a community-wide prayer retreat from 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, Aug. 22.

The theme of the retreat is *Rooted in Christ's Love*, based on Eph. 3:16-18; the day will include sessions and workshops on spiritual practices including labyrinth, rock formations and advocacy as it relates to prayer.

Workshop leaders include Marie Marchand (Dir. of Whatcom Peace and Justice Center), Myra Smith (Dir. of Laughing Flower Labyrinth Design) and Singer/song-writer Garrison Doles (The Song Chapel).

The retreat is free. Refreshments are included. You are welcome to bring a dish for sharing at lunch. Concert by Garrison Doles will take place from 2 to 3 pm. Please register by Mon, Aug. 16, by calling 360-366-5567 or email office_zion@comcast.net. Zion's address is 7215 Valley View Rd., Ferndale.

Celebrate Journeys to Joy

Lutheran Community Services (LCS) Northwest invites you to a fundraising brunch celebrating and supporting the work of our programs. *Journeys to Joy* will be held from 12:30 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 4, at the Bellevue Hilton, Bellevue.

This year's brunch will feature *A Journey from Afghanistan to the Pacific Northwest*, the personal story of LCS Multicultural Community Services Regional Director Salah Ansary and his 25 years serving refugees.

Each year LCS serves more than 120,000 people of all ages and cultures. Our programs depend on the generous financial support of individuals and congregations.

Host a table. Invite friends to learn what our agency is doing to change lives in our communities.

There is no cost to attend the brunch. There will be an opportunity, through gifts and pledges, to support our programs.

For more information please contact Monica Hurley, mhurley@lcsnw.org; or Lynn Naumann at 206- 816-3223.

Important Note. We are combining the effort and expense of our fall and spring events into one annual event. There will not be a spring event.

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