

# 'Always Being Made New'

By the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, bishop



Boerger

**A**lways Being Made New” will be the theme of our synod assembly and the Churchwide Assembly this year.

This theme is part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s formation in 1988.

For some of us this is the anniversary of what was called the “New Lutheran Church.” The planning group for the ELCA was called the Commission for a New Lutheran Church.

In fact, this church has been a

reality for almost as long as our predecessor church bodies. The American Lutheran Church came into being in 1960 and the Lutheran Church in America in 1962. The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches was established in 1976. For many of us these predecessor bodies are still used to define our polity and theology.

The ALC was 28 when the ELCA was formed. The LCA was 26. We are coming to the place where all of us will have been members of this church longer than we were members of its predecessors.

Why bring this up?

I’m not sure we have come to understand ourselves yet as one church. We think of ourselves according to our geography, our history, or our favorite pastor or

congregation. The notion that there is one church in three expressions—churchwide, synod and congregation—is still new to us. Clergy and older members of congregations still refer to the way it used to be.

For our members who have come into the church since 1988 this is unfamiliar history. It is not their lived story. It is an inherited story.

As we remember our 25 years together as a church, we are called to look to the future. It will bring many new experiences and changes.

The church of the future will not be the church of the past or even of the present. That is not frightening because God is doing a new thing in us. We are always being made new. Thanks be to God. □

## Upcoming forums & assembly with bishop election

By Georganne Robertson

**A**lways Being Made New.” This is our theme for the 2013 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly, where we will elect a bishop and join in the 25th anniversary celebration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We will gather May 16-18 at the Lynnwood [Wash.] Convention Center.

Our keynote speaker and ELCA churchwide representative will be Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

Plan now to be part of this year’s assembly. Registration material, with essential information for voting members, has been sent to every

congregation. Visitors are welcome to register and share in this important assembly, where we will celebrate with our leadership and elect the next bishop.

The election of a bishop is a significant moment in the life of a synod and the church. A bishop is called to a unique partnership with members of our congregations, with the churchwide expression of the ELCA, and with other Lutherans and ecumenical leaders in our synod, region and country. The ministry of

.....  
Continued on page C



.....  
Robertson is vice president of the Northwest Washington Synod.

## Northwest Washington



**Maddie Cahoon with Evan Andersson, a Sunday school classmate, is happy knowing that her “noisy cans” make a difference.**

the net, still breathe and be safe from mosquito bites.

### Noisy Can Kids

Every other week during worship at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Arlington, Maddie Cahoon and her Sunday school classmates stand up during the offering and shake cans—tin cans, coffee cans, whatever they can find—and take a noisy offering. Maddie’s project is called “Noisy Can Kids.” Volunteers collect the change and bring it to the bank.

A mural of an African village represents the kids’ efforts as they raise money for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. For every \$50 that’s collected, a miniature “Story Person” is added to the mural. The village is becoming well-populated. In one year, Maddie and her friends have raised more than \$1,000 for the campaign.

“The attitude in our congregation has changed since the ‘Noisy Can Kids’ began their work,” said proud mom Dawn Cahoon. “We used to suffer from the attitude that since our Sunday school doesn’t have a lot of kids, we couldn’t make much of a difference in the world. Maddie showed us otherwise—even one person can make a big difference.” □

# Our faith in action: End malaria

*Editor’s note: Does your congregation know about the ELCA Malaria Campaign? Following are a few stories about how some synod congregations are helping put an end to malaria.*

### ‘Swat Out Malaria’

Oct. 14, 2012, was a milestone day for Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines. On this nationwide World Hunger Sunday, Grace celebrated the giving of more than \$3 million to world hunger and its causes since its focus began in 1975.

Special guests Bishop Chris Boerger and John Nunes, CEO of Lutheran World Relief, along with a videotaped greeting from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, set the tone for the celebration with their inspiring words.

The focus for the day was the ELCA Malaria Campaign ([www.elca.org/malaria](http://www.elca.org/malaria)). Children received their own “Swat Out Malaria” fly-

swatters, which they promptly used to chase another special guest, Marty Mosquito, out of the sanctuary.

The congregational goal of raising funds that day for 500 nets was exceeded threefold when \$15,888 was raised for a total of 1,588 nets.

### Under the mosquito nets

In May 2012, Christ Lutheran Church in Ferndale had the pleasure of hearing Dianne Johnson speak in her role as a volunteer for the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

That day the Rev. Jana Schofield draped a mosquito net over the altar to demonstrate how something so simple and inexpensive can save lives.

During the children’s sermon she invited the kids to experience what it’s like to be under a net. They learned that they could see through



**Children from Christ Lutheran Church in Ferndale under the mosquito net covering the altar.**

Continued from page A

bishops provides leadership, vision, wisdom, guidance, public witness and pastoral care as we work and serve together.

As ministry partners, members of our 98 congregations share in the responsibility and stewardship of our mission in this place. Our hopes, dreams, priorities, challenges and possibilities for mission and ministry of the church in Northwest Washington will be reflected in the decisions we make as we participate in the election process.

This is an important time of discernment within the synod as we prepare for the assembly and election. We are invited to prayerfully reflect on the qualities and gifts of the nominees for bishop.

Our first opportunity to meet

with the nominees are at the forums on May 4-5 when they are invited to share their responses to leadership questions. Details about these forums are posted on the synod website ([www.lutheransnw.org](http://www.lutheransnw.org)).

We ask God to guide us as we prepare for the 2013 synod assembly and the work and celebration of the church in this time and place.

*Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen* ("The mission of the church," Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 75). □



At the 2012 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly, retired pastors A.W. Johnson (left) and Maynard Kragthorpe were recognized for their 60th anniversary of their ordinations.

## New videos for telling the story

**S**tories, wonderful stories. Kent Lutheran Church has a story to tell. Your congregation has a story to tell. Our synod, a collection of all our congregations, has a story to tell.

Jesus sent us to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Witnesses are people who saw something and then tell the story of what they saw. Yes, we witness by using words. But we also witness through the story of our lives joined to those of others in our congregations, like the people of Kent Lutheran who took a trip to South Sudan.

The first disciples told the story of Jesus and what he made possible. We are really no different—still telling the story of what Jesus makes possible among us. Disciples tell stories. And those stories inspire us to want to make more ministry possible. So our discipleship (storytelling) draws out

our financial support for our congregation and the synod.

Pictures tell stories, and moving pictures in the form of videos are amazing tools for storytelling. If you haven't seen them, take a few minutes to watch the videos that have been created about the story of Kent Lutheran and about what we do together in our synod.

Both videos can be downloaded for free at [www.lutheransnw.org/stewardship](http://www.lutheransnw.org/stewardship). Look for "Kent Lutheran: A Modern Day Macedonia Tale" and for "Doing God's Work Together" about our mission in

the Northwest Washington Synod.

Share them with your congregation, council, Bible study group, outreach team, new member class or wherever else you are called to tell the story. □

The Rev. Jerry Buss  
*Buss is director for evangelical mission.*

**The Rev. Jane Prestbye, pastor of Kent [Wash.] Lutheran Church.**





# Alaska Synod



**Bishop Shelley Wickstrom**

## Christ is risen!

By Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

**C**hrist is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

We join with believers across the ages and around the world in celebrating the resurrection. Death and sin do not have the last word. What we thought we knew is revealed as insufficient. There's more—Christ is risen!

I don't understand the mechanics of resurrection. Blood pressure, torn ligaments, punctured lungs get in the way of rising up from the slab of burial. Perhaps the reason the risen Jesus told the women to not embrace him was because it would hurt.

And when Jesus appeared behind closed doors, I don't understand how that happened either—except

that the Spirit has stubbornly been at work even when I've locked my spiritual doors, closed my intellectual blinds and had emotional bear spray on my hand.

When Jesus joined the two on the road to Emmaus, I don't know how his battered body could have withstood that walk. I do know that raw grief takes me to a place where I'm far more honest than I want to be. In the breaking of the bread with them, his companions recognized him.

Glimpses of resurrection simply appear. When one day at a time becomes a week, then months and years, that's a glimpse of resurrection. When through injustice insight is gained and clarity of purpose is found, that's a glimpse of resurrection. When the baptized revel in the love that claims them and the world as God's beloved, that's a glimpse of resurrection. When the doors of the church are thrown open and the church is let loose in the world, that's a glimpse of resurrection.

We live during a time that some are calling the end of Christendom and the re-emergence of Christianity. It is no longer

the norm that people worship on Sunday or join a congregation. We can spend a lot of time lamenting that or we can lean into the future God is asking us to embrace.

The Spirit is at work shaping us in new ways as God's people. It is no longer adequate to equate numbers of attenders with a

vital church. We gather to worship, learn and share.

But we are sent forth to welcome, witness and serve regardless of whether our congregation grows in numbers. We do this because that is what God's people do. That is a glimpse of the resurrection.

We are Easter people who profess what we know and that we don't have to know it all to trust the God who continues to make all things new. We are being shaped as the church God invites us to be for the future.

May your hallelujahs ring loud, not because of what you know but because of what God is still teaching us. Christ is risen! Hallelujah! ☐

**We are Easter**

**people who profess**

**what we know and**

**that we don't have**

**to know it all to**

**trust the God who**

**continues to make**

**all things new.**

**Hatching robin trio.**



CHERYL WICKSTROM