



The Spirit

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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We Are The Stewards Of God's Creation

by The Rev. Chris Boerger, Bishop



At the recent Faith Advocacy Day in Olympia I had the opportunity to testify before a State House committee on the Cap and Invest bill (Senate Bill 5735) that the Governor had proposed to the legislature.

I found myself in this position

because of my involvement with the *Care of Creation Ready Bench* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Conference of Bishops. As a conference we have divided ourselves into small focus groups that will represent this church on current issues in our society. I am on the *Care of Creation Ready Bench*.

I agreed to do this because I am convinced that our stewardship of God's creation is a critical part of what it means to be a human being. God created us to care for this creation. We understand that what we own is in trust for the real owner, God. We are accountable to God, to our neighbors and to future generations for our decisions on how we use this created world.

I will be the first to admit that the science of the current global warming debate is beyond my limited understanding. I also recognize that

those who do have the gift of understanding the complexities of climate and human beings affects on the climate are in agreement that we are having a damaging effect on the world. What we are doing now is not sustainable or desirable.

It is critical for the church to speak on behalf of those who will be damaged by our current practices. This includes many of the poorest communities of our world and for the non-human communities of plants and animals. We are the stewards of God's creation.

So what do we do? I would encourage you to learn more about organizations like Earth Ministry (www.earthministry.org). This site focuses on sustainable practices and the information is written in a very readable and usable format. David Rhoads at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago developed another resource (www.webofcreation.org). On this site you will find information about becoming a *green congregation*. These are two places to start.

In the long term we as a culture will need to change the way we live. That will be hard.

The accusing finger of God's law will once again be pointed at us. We can deny or despair the accusation or we can recognize the call we have from God to be stewards. This is a daily struggle. I encourage your witness to the power of God at work among us and all creation.

Editor's Note: Faith Advocacy Day in Olympia was co-sponsored this year by the Lutheran Public Policy Office (LPPO), the Washington Association of Churches, and the Church Council of Greater Seattle. Many Lutherans were present. In the morning Bishop Boerger, along with an unusual presence of the Governor, testified in support of SB5735 - the Cap & Invest bill. Bishop Boerger serves on Gov. Gregoire's Climate Action Team and serves on the ELCA's Conference of Bishops' *Care of Creation Ready Bench*.

Caring For Our Children

by Anita Proudfoot, Director, Church & Community Relations,
Western Washington, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

All children deserve a safe, happy life – including the nearly 9,500 children in foster care in Washington State alone.

May is National Foster Care Month. This month gives us an opportunity to highlight our mutual ministry providing stable, loving homes for abused and neglected children in our community. Together you and your congregation are involved with Lutheran Community Services (LCS) Northwest in serving foster children through our two foster care programs.

The Permanency Planning Foster Care Program provides safe and stable foster homes for children 0-17 years. LCS provides intensive case management for foster children and foster parents with the goal to create a permanent home for the foster child. LCS foster families are committed to working toward reunification of the birth family. If the child is unable to return home, LCS foster families become the child's adoptive family.

The Refugee and Immigrant Children's Program, in partnership with Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services (LIRS), serves refugee and immigrant children, ages 0 –17, who come from a variety of countries. LCS specializes in working with teenagers who arrive in the United States without their families. Foster families support the youth's adjustment to life here. It is a priority for our program to provide culturally and ethnically matched foster homes whenever possible.

Together we can continue to be a positive change in a foster child's life. No matter how much time you have to give, whether it is a few minutes or a few weeks, you can do something positive that will change a lifetime for a young person in foster care.

For more information about how you and LCS can partner to make a difference in the life of a child, call 206-694-5713 or email mreed@lcsnw.org.

Bringing Our Gifts To God's Party!

This year the Synod Assembly is going to be a celebration!

The two-day assembly at the Lynnwood Convention Center is designed in a new format. Voting members on Friday, May 15, will conduct the business of the Assembly. This allows voting members to give the priority that the business of the synod deserves.

Everyone is welcome on Saturday, May 16, because the day is designed as a celebration. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Leonard Sweet, a nationally known author and teacher. (He wrote the book, *The Gospel According To Starbucks*.)

A celebration worship will take place on Saturday, including a synod-wide choir of all ages. The party will continue throughout the day as we offer many "party" rooms where we will

share resources and ministries that are available in our own synod.

Come, celebrate and learn. We are *Bringing Our Gifts to God's Party!* For more information about May 17 visit www.lutheransnw.org.

The Spirit, a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is intended for members, leaders, and clergy of synod congregations and organizations. Congregations are encouraged to copy **The Spirit** and include it in their own newsletters. **The Spirit** can be downloaded from the Synod website.

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