



The Spirit

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A Message Of Hope And Peace by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



At the March 2011 meeting of the Conference of Bishops we were engaged in conversation about growing the church and evangelism. One of my Midwestern colleagues commented a couple of times

in that conversation that he did not know if Lutherans had the capacity to be evangelists. He did not say this in a pejorative way, but in a wondering question about the way we come together as members of the Body of Christ.

His comments have started my thinking about our evangelism efforts. Historically he is right. We have done evangelism by immigration, marriage and birth.

As more Northern Europeans came to this country we received them into our ethnic communities of similar Northern Europeans. The Lutheran mergers of the 1900's were, in some ways responses, to the slowing or stopping of these immigrations.

We also lived with the expectation that Lutherans would marry Lutherans and give birth to new Lutherans. If not that method then a Lutheran marrying outside the tradition would likely bring their new spouse to the church. The simple fact is that these two methods were our most successful means of growing the church.

Jesus says to the disciples that the "fields are ripe for harvest". Christians are a missionary people. That does not mean that we need to be obnoxious for the faith. It does mean that we will tell our story about Jesus. We live in a time that needs a message of hope and peace. In Jesus we have found our hope and the world's peace.

In this time of cultural battles, we bring the word that God's grace is sufficient for you and for me. God is the one who acts in Jesus. We are the ones who point to that activity. We will continue to do our acts of kindness and compassion. Being nice is not evangelism. As we do good we need to point to Jesus as our motivator and our hope.

I find myself engaged occasionally in interfaith dialogs. In those occasions my fellow participants do not want me to give a partial witness to my faith. If we are in dialog, we must be honest about the hope that is in us. I am a child of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. I am a sinner who has been given new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We are not called to convert the world. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are called to give witness to the hope that is in us.

In Jesus the Christ we have been given the grace of God in exciting and powerful ways. That is more than being a particular ethnic identity. That is being a child of God and giving witness to what is happening to us.

Here 'n There

- Members from **Bow in Edison** were recently thanked for their financial support by Friendship House.
- This year, during Lent, members of **Our Redeemer's in Seattle**, remembered those people who do not have food, money or resources to simply live. And, on Good Friday, April 22, members will be holding a 24-hour prayer vigil beginning at noon. Members are invited to take one-hour during the vigil.
- The Concordia College-New York Tour Choir will be singing at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, at **Ballard First in Ballard**.
- On Palm Sunday members of **Faith in Seattle** held a Spring Food Drive. These donations of food and cash help support the University District Food Bank in Seattle. The Food Bank is also supported by members of **University in Seattle**. University Lutheran was recently thanked for their financial gift. The food bank supports 1,000 families each week.
- **Members of Nativity in Renton** will be participating in the Renton CropWalk to help the hungry on Sunday, May 15. And, the Nativity Choir will be performing the National Anthem at the Tacoma Rainiers game on Friday, July 1. The game begins at 7:05 p.m. at Cheney Stadium.
- **Members at Mount Si in North Bend** have been learning about global cuisine during their Lenten suppers and how their gifts to ELCA World Hunger are making a difference. The offering taken during these suppers will go to ELCA World Hunger.
- **Members of Kent in Kent** held a Sudanese Worship in April. The services were conducted in Nuer. Beginning in May, and between services, members will have an opportunity to explore the rich history and traditions of the Church in Africa. Each week the focus will be on a different country in Africa to learn more about our Christian and Lutheran brothers and sisters on the other side of the world.
- **First Lutheran in Mount Vernon** will be splitting their Lent and Easter offerings between ELCA Disaster Relief and ELCA World Hunger .
- Daniel and Arielle Knapp, two talented children from **Holy Trinity on Mercer Island**, recruited other musically talented children to play in a benefit concert for the children of Japan affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami. The concert was held on April 17.
- **WELCA** is now collecting inventory for its June 17 and 18 rummage sale. Half of the proceeds from the sale will support WELCA's mission programming, and half will support Cathy and Jyoti Mutschler's living/medical expenses during Jyoti's illness. Cathy has served as Youth Director for Faith in North Lakewood. Her daughter, Jyoti, has been healing since last July from a brain illness at the UW Hospital.
- In 2010, through their **Hot Meals Program**, members at **Gethsemane in Seattle** served: 8,000 sandwiches; 500 gallons of soup; 5,000 glasses of juice; 480 plates of crackers and pickles; 480 goody (dessert) plates; thousands of cups of coffee; hundreds of donated desserts and sandwiches from Starbucks; and 52 movies.
- Members at **Central in Bellingham** shipped the following totals to LWR in 2010: 180 quilts; 107 School Kits; 159 Health Kits; 124 Layettes; and 25 extra bath soap bars.
- Come rain or shine members at **Central in Everett** will be picking up trash in their neighborhood in mid-May. With trash bags, gloves and hand sanitizer they will go to their assigned area and pick up garbage.

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