



The Spirit

Volume 26, Number 4

News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

April 2009

Now Is The Time To Speak and To Listen

by The Rev. Chris Boerger, Bishop



After seven years of study, hundreds of public hearings and thousands of letters the proposed social statement on human sexuality has now been distributed to the church.

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust will be

part of the decision making process at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis in August (www.elca.org/assembly). Now is the time for members of this church to comment to those who will be voting on the document, the members of the assembly.

Northwest Washington has 11 members of this assembly. Over the coming months we will be holding three or four hearings so that you can address these members before they travel to Minneapolis. The schedule is not established yet, but you can watch for information on the synod website, www.lutheransnw.org.

A statement on a topic such as sexuality will not satisfy everyone. Since its release, I have heard from some of you that believe the statement does not go far enough to address the issues, some who believe it has gone too far from scripture and tradition, and some who find the statement a good way to address our diverse church on a controversial topic. We reflect the voices that have been spoken at our Synod Assemblies and demonstrate the diverse perspectives of the members of this church.

A second document has also been presented. The Human Sexuality Task Force was asked by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to: "specifically to address and make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church." *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* presents four resolutions that could change our present policy.

I do have some concerns about the parliamentary process regarding this four step approach at the Assembly. The Task Force's approach does make process sense as a way of making decision in a small group. How it will work with 1090 members will be interesting.

The report and recommendations now go to the ELCA Church Council who will craft the final resolution for the assembly. Those resolutions will be available for synod assemblies to memorialize after the March meeting of the Churchwide Council. Proposed memorials to the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly are to be submitted by May 1, 2009, to the synod office.

Now is the time for us to be in respectful dialog about the social statement and the report and recommendations. The task force has done what we asked them to do.

Now our work begins as we listen to their work and prayerfully respond to these proposals. We hold a variety of views about these issues. Now is the time for us to speak and to listen.

A New Campus Ministry

by The Rev. Scott Postlewait, Lutheran Campus Pastor, University of Washington

Grace Chinese Lutheran Church in Seattle and Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Washington have partnered to provide an outreach ministry at the University of Washington (UW).

Mr. Zhenchuan Liu will be leading efforts to serve International Students and Scholars at the UW. Zhenchuan began efforts last Fall to connect international students with host families for the holidays. Those efforts continued with a kickoff ministry event in February. International students and scholars were invited to an introductory dinner at Lutheran Campus Ministry. The response was overwhelming!

"International students have great needs," said Zhenchuan. "They often lead very isolated lives when they arrive at the University, focusing on their studies, and limited by language and cultural differences."

The kickoff dinner was a wonderful time for these visiting students and scholars to enjoy

community, to welcome them to Covenant House and to introduce them to Zhenchuan, Pastor Jimmy Hao of Grace Chinese Lutheran in Seattle and myself.

The ministry continues with "English Talk Time" during the month of March, where International Students will gather with Lutheran Campus Ministry students for peer taught English and American Culture conversations.

It's an exciting time for ministry at the UW. It's been a joy working with Zhenchuan. He has a wonderful gift for inviting and welcoming. His enthusiasm is contagious, and his care for students is warm and genuine.

For more information and to help support this ministry, contact Pastor Jimmy Hao at jianhuahao@yahoo.com, Pastor Scott Postlewait at chscott@drizzle.com, or Everett Savage at ewsavage@msn.com. The website for the Campus Ministry at the Covenant House at the UW is <http://uwcrossroads.com>.

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 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.

Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA

5519 Phinney Ave North
Seattle, WA 98103-5829
Telephone: 206-783-9292
Toll Free: 1-800-244-6997
Fax: 206-783-9833
Email: office@lutheransnw.org

Editor: Margit Peiffle

Email: margit@lutheransnw.org
Telephone: 425-299-6667
Website: www.lutheransnw.org

Information for the May 2009 issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, April 2.

