



The Spirit

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

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Making Progress by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



Last year at the Synod Assembly it was reported that a child dies of Malaria every 45 seconds. At the last Synod Council meeting, Dianne Johnson, Associate in Ministry and member of Council, reported that this statistic has changed. It is now, one

child dies every 60 seconds. That is still not good, but it represents that fact that as the world is giving attention to fighting this disease, the fight is making progress.

We have a long way to go. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Malaria Campaign is this church's way of responding with the rest of the world to this reality.

The ELCA is working with companion churches in Africa so that the administrative costs of this effort will be less than one might expect. That is one of the benefits of being part of a larger church. Our regular benevolences (often called mission support) pays for the administrative costs of much of what this church does when it comes to relief work and disaster response.

Many groups around the world are now responding to the issues related to Malaria. Basketball and soccer leagues are focusing on nets. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is taking a leadership role in the effort. The United Nations Foundation is leading one approach to fighting this disease. This is an opportune time to address the threat of malaria.

As reported, a small step has been taken on this journey. For the next three years the ELCA will be actively seeking support for our part of this campaign.

There are a variety of ways that members of this synod can support this work. Contributions can be made through your congregation, who can then forward the funds through the synod to the churchwide organization. All of the funds collected are sent to support the appeal. Direct contributions can be made through the ELCA website.

I am told that people today want to know that their monetary gifts are making a difference. I would argue that support of any of the church's appeals and mission support does that. I can specifically say that support of the ELCA Malaria Campaign will save lives. I invite you to join with me in supporting this campaign.

More information about the ELCA Malaria Campaign can be found at www.elca.org/malaria.

*Editor's Note: Dianne Johnson, Associate in Ministry at Lord of Life Lutheran in Renton, is a **griot**. In West Africa, a griot is a storyteller, a singer, a history keeper and an agent of cultural change. It is a role honored throughout the region.*

Dianne may not look like your typical griot but she has joined this West African tradition and is telling the story of malaria. Would you like Dianne to come and share the story why this Malaria Campaign is so important? You may contact her at dianne@lollc.org.

Haiti

From Old Sugar Factory To A Center Of Hope

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) visited Haiti in 2011. Bishop Hanson was escorted by the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti, Pastor Joseph Livenson Lauvanus. As part of that trip Pastor Livenson walked Bishop Hanson up to an old building outside of Gressier, just west of Port-au-Prince. Pastor Livenson asked the bishop what he saw, to which he replied, "An old sugar factory." Pastor Livenson replied that he saw:

"A place of hope for my community. I see a community center where my brothers and sisters are learning."

It is that type of foresight that has turned this site of rubble into a place of restoration and hope.

Today, two years after the disastrous earthquake, this same site is covered by people working, learning and laughing. Here, through donations to ELCA Disaster Response and other partners, the Lutheran church in Haiti is building a complex that includes a K-12 school, a vocational training school with 40 current students enrolled in their 18-month program, an office building, a guest house and, if Pastor Livenson has anything to do with it (which he does), a convention center.

On the second anniversary of the earthquake a remembrance service was held and eight members of Ben Larson's family also participated. (Ben was an ELCA seminarian working in Haiti who was killed in the earthquake.) Pastor Livenson shared how this remembrance was not just to honor those who had been lost, and the hard road he and his brothers and sisters have walked over the past two years, but to celebrate the blessing of support they have received from all quarters of the world. This blessing of God, as he called it, has given hope to those who saw nothing but despair.

Pastor Livenson says, "The church in Haiti and I will continue to pray for you just as I know, from looking around me, that you have been praying for us."

That **YOU** may be well
A conversation about living well



As leaders in the church we are called to pass on our faith. We know that healthy leaders enhance lives. How can we live well, centered as a whole person of God? How we catch our breath, and become an agent of health and wellness in our faith community?

That You May Be Well is a workshop to provide you with a curriculum for your whole person well-being and you will be able to share with others in your congregation. If you are interested in living well and sharing good health, you are invited to join us.

That You May Be Well will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 14, at Hope Lutheran Church, 900 E. Grover St. Lynden, WA 98264-1628.

Cost is \$20 and includes lunch and snacks (\$25 if space available after March 16). Register with Pam Colyar at 360-354-1934 or pamparishnurse@gmail.com. Pastors, health ministers, parish nurses, lay leaders and any others interested in health and wellness are invited to join us.

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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