



The Spirit

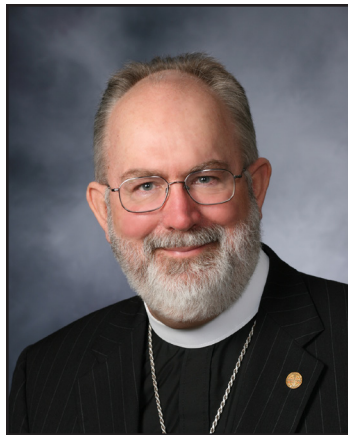
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News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

February 2009

Job Well Done!

by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



There is an old joke about how many Lutherans it takes to change a light bulb. The response is: Change?

It is true that we are resistant to change. In this time of regular and continuing change, this may seem like a strange

dichotomy. When the ELCA was established we used the term new Lutheran church to describe our hopes for this merged denomination.

I remember being a part of a planning group that was to design one of the new features of this church. The Regional Center for Mission was seen as a service office (known to us as Region 1) that would assist the congregations, synods and churchwide expressions of this new church. The thought was that small synod staffs would focus on relationships and the region would focus on needed programs for the church.

The vision was never fully realized. Changing mission support patterns, expanded availability of program ideas through the internet and expanded non-denominational sources and the reality that Region 1 covers a large geography all worked to transform the dream. (Region 1 consists of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.)

There have been some remarkable accomplishments. The Western States Youth Gathering came from Region 1. The shared Financial Services Office (FSO) is unique to this region. And, until last year, we shared the candidacy process through a multisynodical committee.

Change does come to us. With the change of deploying staff by the ELCA Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Ministry unit, we will see the Region 1 office shrink to just the office of the coordinator and the FSO. This may be a sign of maturity on the part of the synods of the region. Maturity does bring its share of growing pains. One of these is the loss of relationship with people who have served us well.

There have been a number of people who have served us in the Regional Office. Cathie Carlisle and Janet Nelson both served in predecessor church bodies and have been with us for more than 20 years. At the end of January that service will come to an end. It is important that we recognize the faithful service of these two women. They have served us well.

Change is never easy. The truth of this affects our whole world. The fact is that change is necessary for life to continue. We need to grow in faith and service. That is the reason behind our changes. We also need to pay attention to those most directly affected by our changes. We need to say thank you and speak of the jobs well done.

Editor's Note: In last month's column Bishop Boerger wrote about the January Conference of Bishops Academy in the Middle East. He has recently returned. To read the ELCA's blog and press releases, or to view photos and video, please visit <http://blogs.elca.org/09cobacademy>.

2009 Synod Assembly *Bringing Our Gifts To God's Party!*

The 2009 Synod Assembly is going to be a celebration!

The two-day assembly is designed in a new format this year so that the celebration and the business can both take priority. The 2009 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly will take place Friday, May 15, and Saturday, May 16, at the Lynnwood Convention Center, Lynnwood.

Friday is all business. This allows us to give the priority that the business of the synod deserves.

Saturday is designed with a celebration of who the Northwest Washington Synod is. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Leonard Sweet, a nationally known author and teacher. Check out his website (www.leonardsweet.com).

Celebration worship will be on Saturday and will include a synod-wide choir of all ages. The party will continue through the day as we offer

many "party" rooms where we will be sharing all of the resources and ministries that are available in our own synod. Come to celebrate who we are and what we are doing.

Saturday is open to **everyone**. Voting members will be there, but we also want to share this "party" with everyone.

Come, celebrate and learn. We are *Bringing Our Gifts to God's Party!*

Want more information right away? Contact co-chair, Pam Kluth at purplepatch47@hotmail.com or Kim Unti at Kim.unti@comcast.net

We are excited to share with you what the plans are.

Maybe you would like to help host the party – we would love to have you join us.

As more information becomes available visit www.lutheransnw.org.



Northwest Washington Synod Assembly
May 15 -16, 2009

Lutheran Disaster Response—Looking Back To 2008

What a year! In the early spring, it seemed like tornadoes were going to be the main cause of human need for the year. According to the National Weather Service, there were at least 500 more tornadoes in 2008 than in 2007.

Then, the summer brought widespread flooding across the Midwest, where some places experienced 100-year, and even 500-year, flood levels. In Iowa alone, over 40,000 households registered for assistance through FEMA. The late summer brought one of the most active Atlantic hurricane seasons in recorded history. For the first time ever, six consecutive named storms made U.S. landfall, including the four distinct landfalls of Tropical Storm Fay which caused watches or warnings for the entire Florida coast. Along the way, there was an earthquake and wildfires. And all of this was competing for media attention with a Presidential election and the unfolding of a damaging recession.

To learn more about how Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) helps those in need visit www.ldr.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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