



# The Spirit

Volume 27, Number 8

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

October 2010

## *Fall Is A Time Of Transformation* by The Rev. Jan Nesse, Acting Bishop



I have always loved the Fall. When I was growing up in Yakima, September was all about picking apples and going back to school. September smelled like newsprint and crayons. I imagine that has changed for kids now, I don't even see the boxes of eight chunky crayons in the school supply

sections of Target and Fred Meyer. Too bad.

But October was my favorite month, partly because it ended with Halloween but mostly because it was cool, crisp, and colorful. The trees started to change in September but they were in full color by October and they were harbingers of promise. I knew that even before I understood what resurrection meant.

And actually, I was well into my adult years before I began to see the Fall foliage of October as anything more than a beautiful display of nature. In learning why foliage of deciduous plants change color, I discovered that even though the plant is not "thinking" as we consider thought, there is reason behind the colors and reason behind the falling leaves.

Leaves fall because the carbohydrates feeding the cells that hold them on to the branches begin to be stored for next year's growth. They change color because the chlorophyll that continues to be replaced during the growing season is blocked off in the abscission layer and the yellow and orange colors, already present in the leaf, begins to show through. The red colors come from sugar that is trapped in the leaf and can't escape because of the blockage. The abscission layer becomes dry and corky to protect the plant during the winter.

The intensity of the colors comes from temperature, soil moisture, and length of nights. But eventually, all the colors break down from those same factors, leaving us with only the brown leaves hanging on the trees and lying on the streets. If the plant did not change during the Fall, it would die during the winter. If it does change, it becomes the host for new life in the Spring.

Fall is a time of transformation and intention. It is a time of hope and promise. The non-thinking plants demonstrate God's plan for continuing sustainability, continuing transformation, continuing resurrection. And while we see in the buds of Spring that new life is on the way, the vibrant colors of Fall proclaim that same message when it is harder for us to see it.

As a child we used to bring a "pretty leaf" to school for show and tell because we were simply awed by the colors. We didn't understand anything about why leaves changed or what God's plan was for the world. And I guess that's what Jesus meant when he said, "those who have ears, should hear." With the powerful proclamation of Fall, I now reflect on the message of sustainability, transformation, and resurrection. Are there things in my life being stored and protected to feed the next generation? Am I changing as the conditions around me change? Does my life proclaim the promise of resurrection? How does the message of promise and transformation apply to my church?

This is why I like October, it makes me think about what God has in mind for me as a part of his bigger design.

## Upcoming Youth Events

- Let Justice Roll, Oct. 9-11, Holden Village, Chelan—Trinity Lutheran College, Everett, is a co-sponsor of an annual high school youth event for those interested in peace and justice issues. The event is held at Holden Village (near Chelan). This year's theme is Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust. The program includes group presentations, small group discussions, a service project, and lots of time to relax, hike, and enjoy God's creation.
- Focus on Youth Ministry: Peer Ministry Training Nov. 5-6, Trinity Lutheran College, Everett—Lyle Griner, national director of

Peer Ministry Leadership, will lead a two-day training event for youth ministry staff, pastors, volunteers and young people. Peer Ministry empowers youth for important roles as leaders and listeners among their peers. Participants will be equipped to facilitate training in practical ministry skills within churches, camps, college ministries, and other groups. Cost: \$99 per adult, including training manual.

*Editor's Note: For more information visit [www.tlc.edu/cyfcenter](http://www.tlc.edu/cyfcenter), or contact the Rev. David Ellingson at 425.249.4722 or [david.ellingson@tlc.edu](mailto:david.ellingson@tlc.edu).*

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## Here 'n There

**Central Lutheran in Seattle** in July served more than 2925 meals, or an average of 320 meals per day. Central in Seattle, through their twice-a-week Community Lunch on Capitol Hill, has been serving meals for many years. In 2008 it served 170 to 240 guest per meal. More than half the guests at the meals during the past six months have topped 260 guests. **Central Lutheran in Everett** helps feed the homeless on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.

**Read the Qur'an in Four Weeks**—Check out this unique class with Pastor Ron Marshall (First Lutheran of West Seattle, [www.flcws.org](http://www.flcws.org)), who has been teaching it four times a year since 2003. Classes are from 7-9 p.m., October 7, 14, 21, 28. The \$50 fee includes your own approved translation of the Qur'an, plus over a hundred handouts on the Qur'an by Islamic scholars. To register or make inquiries, contact Pastor Marshall at 206-935-6530; [deogloria@foxinternet.com](mailto:deogloria@foxinternet.com).

**The Northwest Washington Synod is blessed to have new seminary interns.** They are: John Simonson, Edmonds (Pastor Julie Josund); Kathryn Emery, Central, Everett (Pastor Jeff Russell); Rachel Voxland, Trinity, Lynnwood (Pastor Paul Sundberg); Ryan Cosgrove, St John United and LPPO (Pastor Carol Jensen and Pastor Paul Benz); Ethan Hulme, Our Redeemer's, Seattle (Pastor Kathy Hawks); and Justin Mootz, First Richmond

Beach (Pastor John Bjorge). We welcome them.

**Prince of Peace Lutheran in Shoreline** said good-bye to the residents of Tent City 3 on June 26. Prince of Peace says that, once again, the residents were excellent neighbors and were always willing to lend a hand.

**Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran in Everett** will again have an opportunity to worship with inmates at the Shelton Correctional Center. October's worship will take place on October 2.

**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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Information for the November issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, October 6.