



The Spirit

Volume 27, Number 7

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

September 2010

Remember The Sabbath And Keep It Holy **by The Rev. Jan Nesse, Acting Bishop**



Summer is over, not when the weather changes, but when programs and activities pick up again. Some people dread the thought of carpools, hectic schedules, homework, preparations and practices. Other people welcome the structure of routine and the lively hum of a busy life. But from either perspective all Christians ask themselves, "How does faith and church life fit into the 24/7 culture of the 21st century?"

Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy. There is probably a reason that this spiritual discipline was included in the Ten Commandments; it's that important. We look at nature and see the dormancy of plants, the hibernation of animals and even the resting cycles of insects. Add to that observation a study that was done in the 1960s by the Department of Architectural Studies at Sheffield University that showed that buildings used heavily every day of the week suffered "stress" and were unlikely to last as long as buildings that had one 24 hour period of "rest" during the week. One test does not prove or disprove anything, but it is interesting how all of creation follows patterns of Sabbath.

For us to remember the Sabbath, we need to take time for rest, relaxation, and reconnection and not think of it as a waste of time. How about making plans now as we anticipate the end of summer, to make time to remember the Sabbath; make time to worship as a family. It's true, sometimes for kids, worship isn't rest, relaxation, or reconnection and family attendance becomes sporadic. Rather than eschewing

worship attendance and giving the message that it isn't important, talk with the pastor and worship committee about what might make worship more meaningful to your family and to other families.

After resting in the Word in worship, remembering the Sabbath means the whole day. So take home the themes from worship and repeat them at home. Read and talk about the scripture readings at home, even pick a passage to memorize as a family. And then do something relaxing. What hobby or activity helps you relax? How can you share that with your family? How can you invite others to be a part of your Sabbath relaxation? Do things on the Sabbath that make God smile. Do things that make you smile.

Reconnection is another purpose of Sabbath. Reconnect with your children, asking them to share their dreams and hopes. Share with them the joy they have brought to your life. Encourage them to share their hobbies with you, play with them, affirm their uniqueness and giftedness, and let them know they are a valued child of God.

Reconnection with friends and neighbors, other church members, and other people who would welcome your interest in their lives is also the perfect way to remember the Sabbath. Invite one or two to share your Sunday meal with you and participate in your family Sabbath. You might also reconnect with those who have gone before, taking flowers to the cemetery, telling the stories that made those people unique and important, and share the values they passed on to you. Honor their presence among the saints.

Remember The Sabbath

And then in our asphalt commute, our electronic vistas, and our flurry of words and symbols, take time on the Sabbath to reconnect with creation. Who wouldn't like to go to the park, the beach, or even a walk around the neighborhood? Who wouldn't like to bike as a family along a trail, take a boat ride, or climb a hill in the woods?

Remember the Sabbath...rest, relax, and reconnect...and keep it Holy. As a spiritual discipline, Sabbath is set apart from the rest of the week as something intentionally different. Dinner might taste different, with different people around the table, different food, or different pace of the meal. The sounds might be different as family members unplug their headsets, turn

off their ipods, and listen to something that the family has selected together. There may be intentional sounds of harmony, affirmation, blessing, and maybe even singing. It may be different because there are no conflicting schedules to draw the family in different directions because the day was planned ahead of time.

As summer ends, whether we embrace the change or dread it, planning for Sabbath deserves our faithful attention. What value is more important than the one God built into creation in order to sustain it? Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy...you'll be glad you did.

Here 'n There

- **Central Lutheran in Bellingham** holds a potluck for seniors at noon on the second Monday of every month.
- **Holy Trinity Lutheran on Mercer Island** is holding a 4th and 5th Dog & Car Wash on Sunday, Aug. 22. The goal is to raise \$500 for the Angel Tree and Build-a-Bear for EMT's this coming year.
- **Members of Quenn Anne Lutheran in Seattle** sent 68 quilts, 21 layettes, 25 school kits and 52 health kits to LWR in May. And, **members of Our Saviour's in Stanwood** shipped 98 quilts, 12 layette kits and two soap boxes to LWR. The congregation also gave five baby quilts to the food bank children's Christmas House, as well as five to the men's shelter and 20 to the womens shelter in Everett.
- **Holy Spirit Lutheran in Kirkland** had more than 169 children at their *God's Great Get-Together Vacation Bible School*. More than 90 volunteers gave of their time and talent to make the event a success.
- **Members of Morning Star Lutheran** and from Monroe United Methodist Church, both located in Monroe, held a joint worship and potluck on August 8.
- **First Lutheran in Mount Vernon** provides a dinner meal the last Tuesday of every month at *Friendship House*, a shleter for the

homeless. Members also volunteered at the Smokey Point Rest Stop in July handing out refreshments and cookies. For their efforts \$617.65 was donated to *Skagit Community Action*.

- **Greg Pearey, grandson of Ida Morgan, member of First Lutheran in Bothell**, has been drafted by the New York Mets. He had just completed his junior year at Oregon State University.

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 October issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, September 1.