



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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Called To Address Significant Social Issues

by The Rev. Chris Boerger, Bishop



One of the duties of the office of Synod Bishop is to “interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;” (S8.12.g.1).

In recent days I have acted on this provision in making public statements

on issues that are political in nature. This is bringing the expected push back by those who disagree with my statements. That is good. It enables and encourages dialog in the church and in the larger community about issues that confront us.

Recently I have signed an open letter to the legislature related to funding state services and our tax system and I have testified before the federal EPA hearing in Seattle related to their finding that green house gases are a form of pollution under the Clean Air Act.

Both of these statements are based on ELCA Social Statements. It is important to say that our social statements exist as teaching documents in the church and as platforms for Churchwide and Synod leaders to address public entities.

Response to my recent comments suggests that we are not using these documents as teaching documents in congregations. We have nine Social Statements that have been adopted by ELCA Churchwide Assemblies since 1991. The first statement *Church in Society, A Lutheran Perspective* is the foundational document that describes the purpose and role of Social

Statements in this church.

Social statements are developed in response to requests from Synod Assemblies or Churchwide Assemblies. They go through a lengthy study process and an additional comment process on proposed draft statements. Finally the proposed statement must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of a Churchwide Assembly. My observation is that for many of our members that adoption means we forget that we have said anything on the topic.

My comments on the Washington State budget process were based on our statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*. My comments to the EPA were based on our statement, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*. These and the other seven statements are available online on the ELCA website. I invite your discussion and study of these teaching tools.

If there are areas of our life in the world where you believe it would be helpful to study and speak out, I invite you to submit a resolution to next year’s Synod Assembly memorializing the ELCA to begin such a study. This church has spent significant time and energy in developing these tools. Bishops and others who are asked to speak on behalf of this church are to use these documents in their presentations. It would be important for the whole church to know what to expect from those of us who address these issues.

(Editor’s Note: More information about our Social Statements can be found at www.elca.org. On the bottom of the page click on Church in Society.)

Sharing Its Own Good Fortune

by The Rev. Maynard Atik, Gethsemane Lutheran in Seattle

Gethsemane Lutheran Mission Endowment Committee has awarded \$45,000 among eight recipients in varying amounts. This was made possible by the interest accrued from the Mission Endowment Fund (MIF)

This is the second year that grants have been given. Hopefully, this will give congregation members and friends incentive to render gifts to the Mission Endowment Fund. The following entities received grants:

- ♦ **Gethsemane Community Services**, provides a variety of services to the homeless and marginalized individuals in Seattle.
- ♦ **Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary**, Berkeley, CA, allows 20 seminary students to experience a cross cultural ministry in a distant mission setting.
- ♦ **The Church of Steadfast Love**, a congregation in the Compass Center, serving both Spanish and English speaking members.
- ♦ **Elizabeth Gregory Home, Seattle**, serving women recovering from hopelessness, by providing transitional housing and other services to help them stabilize and become self-sufficient and thrive.
- ♦ **Interfaith Task Force on homelessness, Seattle**, to help support work to create the

political will to end homelessness in Seattle and adjacent cities.

- ♦ **Lutheran Community Services NW – Cascade People’s Center, Seattle**, to support the center as a family support and community effort, providing support networks and information.
- ♦ **Grace Chinese Lutheran Church, Seattle**, supervising and supporting a Chinese Christian seminary graduate to partner with Covenant House (Lutheran Campus Ministry in the UW neighborhood) to coordinate and supervise program activities to reach Chinese students and integrate them into Christian campus activities and local churches.
- ♦ **Iglesia Luterana El Camino De Emaus (Lutheran Church, The Road to Emmaus), Burlington**, enriching the Hispanic community and strengthen the congregation.

Gethsemane Lutheran Mission Endowment Fund looks forward to hearing from these ministries how these grants will enable them to perform their tasks in proclaiming the Gospel to their respective communities.

Grant applications for 2010 will be available in November 2009. For grant applications, please visit Gethsemane Lutheran’s website at www.urbanfaith.org.

Good News

by Margie Fiedler, MIF

The ELCA Mission Investment Fund (MIF) has a “special” now thru July 1. We’ve added .50 percent to our rates on MissionPlus investments. Along with a great rate, you enjoy checkbook availability, Visa debit card and the freedom to add to or withdraw anytime. Plus, your investment is liquid, and there are no fees. And you can take comfort in knowing that in the 90-plus-year history of MIF and its predecessors, no investor has ever lost money on an investment. Most of all, you get the added satisfaction of helping to build your church. The money you invest helps the MIF make loans to ELCA congregations and related ministries for building and renovation projects. For all the details, visit: www.elca.org/mif and click on What’s New?

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