



The Spirit

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God's Creation And Stewardship by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



We are to be stewards of God's creation. The book of Genesis reports that some of the first commands that God gives our ancestor Adam are to care for the creation and its creatures. Much of the Biblical story is about how humankind has failed in this basic assignment we

have been given.

Today we are confronting this task yet again. Issues related to climate change are debated and intruding into our global awareness. I have said before that I am convinced that the scientists have identified a serious problem for us to address. This is an issue of stewardship.

Our annual stewardship event this year will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24 at St. John United Lutheran Church, Seattle. The theme of the day is *Greening Your Congregations*. The speaker will be Professor H. Paul Johnson from the University of Washington. He is a Professor of Marine Geology and Geophysics. There will also be a series of practical workshops related to our congregational stewardship of creation.

Frankly much of the discussion of our stewardship of the creation is simply talk. We

need to move beyond the head scratching phase of our response to acting in ways that respond to God's command. This event is a beginning place for our congregations and members. Mark your calendars for September 24, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Our responses will vary as we consider this issue. The ELCA adopted a social statement, *Caring for Creation, Vision, Justice and Hope* that can be used in adult forums as a starting place for this discussion. The *Greening Your Congregation* event can help us find practical responses to this overwhelming problem. Our conversations can encourage action and creativity in responding to God's command.

Stewardship is often limited to our discussions of time, talent and treasure. It is also limited by my sin that would like to ignore the problems that I am creating for the world and my children. Seeing that our response to climate change is a stewardship issue is a first step toward taking the responsibility that we must assume in this issue.

How shall the congregations of which we are members respond to the issue of climate change? What is our role in creating this crisis? Come on September 24 and be a part of our response to God's command.

Editor's Note: The keynote speaker and Bishop Chris Boerger are the presenters in the morning of *Greening Your Congregation*. In the afternoon you will be able to choose among eight workshops (offered twice so you can attend two), which will focus on what you and your congregation can do to care for creation.

For details about the speaker, workshops and registration for this event, please visit the calendar on the synod's website at www.lutheransnw.org.

The ELCA social statement *Caring for Creation, Vision, Justice and Hope* can be found at www.elca.org/environment and click on the Caring For Creation Resources

Raising Chickens In Ethiopia

by Ken Halvorson, Chair, Synod Global Mission Committee

The Northwest Washington Synod has raised \$45,157.94 towards the Ethiopian Chicken Hatchery project through the generosity of individuals, Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools and congregations. Creativity has been in abundance as people have backed the project. Our goal is to send \$35,440 this year, \$14,400 next year and \$12,000 in 2013.

In two to three years, we expect the Ethiopian Chicken Hatchery to begin paying for itself and start producing income. When this happens, we will reduce our contributions except to buy additional equipment as needed. Our long-range goal, and theirs, is to make this project stand on its own and be productive in protein, jobs, community and money for Ethiopian Church leadership training.

Last spring five of us went to Ethiopia to check on the development of the hatchery. It seemed that God arranged this team because each person brought different skills and perspectives. One is a retired lawyer who was invaluable in the business end of discussions. Another is a builder who was impressed with the basic serviceability of the future hatchery buildings. The third person had excellent skills at relating and visiting with people. Each team member came home convinced that this is a worthwhile project.

We had very good discussions with the Mekane Yesus Church leaders and others. The government approved this project due to great need, but also wanted assurance that it was a viable and well funded program. The government wanted the project to be larger to raise more chickens because of the great need. The Ethiopian Church stood their ground saying they would start small and grow into a larger hatchery.

Upon our return to Washington, at our team's recommendation, the Synod Council Executive Committee and Bishop Boerger approved a letter of intent to support the chicken hatchery. The letter of intent stated that our Synod will provide \$102,000 (including money already raised) for six years as the hatchery develops. With this assurance the government gave its approval for the Mekane Yesus church to use the land and buildings at Haik for development of the chicken hatchery. The Ethiopian Church is now hiring a manager, choosing equipment and supplies, and modifying the buildings on the hatchery site.

Pray On 9/11

The Rev. Maynard Atik (ret.) will be returning to the Ground Zero site to volunteer as chaplain at the World Trade Center Memorial on Sunday, Sept. 11. He asks for all to offer the following prayers:

Remember, O God, those who suffer the loss of loved ones;

Remember all who have died in the conflict with terrorism;

Remember those who are still filled with fear or anger;

Remember this nation and those we call enemies;

Stir your church to declare your peace where there is hatred;

Hold all in your love and justice. Amen.

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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