



# 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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## Conversation About Immigration Reform

by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



Regardless of your political perspective it is clear that our immigration system in this country is broken. I recognize this is a very emotional topic. I can hear the voices saying that in this time of uncertainty and division in our church and

our culture I would do us all a favor by not bringing the subject up. I bring it up not to push a particular point of view which I do have. I bring it up because the status quo is not working.

As we have begun working with immigrant populations in our new ministries the stories of the failure of our current system are increasing. I spent Good Friday evening two years ago with a group of Indonesian Lutherans saying good bye to one of their group who was being deported because an American attorney had missed a hearing on her in-laws' asylum request. I have written about how this experience gave new meaning to the Good Friday story.

With our global connections in the church we are learning that we have much to learn from other Lutheran Christians from around the world. The ability of this church to engage these important leaders is limited by our maze of immigration issues.

I had the opportunity to tour the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. This prison run by a for-profit corporation is where those detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement are housed. It is an amazing experience to hear how persons about to face deportation are treated and how a private company profits from building prison space on the speculation that they will be filled.

I know of no one who believes that the immigration system as we now have it is working. We need to have the debate about how it should be reformed. It is a political hot potato. I want to encourage you to be involved in this debate. We will have different ideas about how this should be resolved. I know that. Our silence on the issue is only perpetuating the current confusion. Most of us can still tell stories of our immigrant ancestors. We need to be involved in how the current stories are being created by our new immigrants.

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## Northwest Washington Synod Assembly

The 2011 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly will take place on Friday, May 13, and Saturday, May 14, at the Lynnwood Convention Center in Lynnwood

The theme for this year's assembly is centered around two ELCA Campaigns: the ELCA Malaria Campaign and the ELCA HIV and AIDS Campaign. Offerings will be given to those

campaigns as well as to the local organization African Americans Reach and Teach Health ([www.aarth.org](http://www.aarth.org)).

**Nominations and resolutions are due to the Synod Office by March 1.** As material becomes available, documents will be posted on-line on the assembly website at [www.lutheransnw.org](http://www.lutheransnw.org).

# Men And Women Gather

## Lutheran Men in Mission

You are invited on a life changing adventure. Register now for the *Building Men and Men's Ministry for Christ* Mini-Retreat from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 5, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7215 51st Ave NE, Marysville. Registration fee is \$50 per person. The retreat will be led by Doug Haugen, ELCA's Lutheran Men in Mission Executive Director. If you have questions contact Ron Sailer at 360-658-0461 or at rksailer@gmail.com

## Women Gather

The Eighth Triennial Gathering for the Women of the ELCA's will be held July 14 - 17 in Spokane, Wash. Take time out of your busy life to build lasting memories with your mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, cousins and best friends you call sisters. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to build fellowship among generations. For more information including registration and costs please visit <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Women-of-the-ELCA/Triennial-Convention-and-Gathering/Triennial-Gathering.aspx>.

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## Here 'n There

- There is an ark sitting in the sanctuary at **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Alderwood Manor**. How can that be? Jonas and Mary Hawk built the Ark, with animals ready for sailing. It was built to commemorate the animals the Sunday School offerings will purchase for families around the world through Heifer International.
- **The youth at First Lutheran Church in Richmond Beach** will hold a 30-hour famine at the end of February. Leading up to the event the youth will raise money for hungry children around the world and participate in service projects.
- Many churches in the Renton community have banded together to create housing for homeless men in their midst. The name for this endeavor is A.R.I.S.E. (Area of Renton Interfaith Shelter Endeavor). In March **Lakeridge Lutheran Church in Renton** will be hosting up to 30 men each evening. Several Lutheran congregations in that cluster have agreed to help provide a hot meal for these men each evening. **Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Renton** will be responsible for cooking and serving eight meals that month. They will also provide sack lunches and breakfasts.
- **Pastor Mary Lindberg, Immanuel Lutheran Church in Seattle**, wrote an article for the January issue of *The Lutheran* called *One For You*. You can find the article on page 20.
- **Members of First Lutheran Church**

**in Mount Vernon** gave \$3265.03 to the Friendship House. The organization estimates that this donation will provide more than 6,000 hot meals and many warm nights to brothers and sisters who would have gone without.

- **Members of First Lutheran Church in Bothell** will be celebrating their 125th anniversary on March 19.
- **The Brown Bag Brigade at Morning Star Lutheran Church in Monroe** continues to serve 218 lunches every week for those in need.

*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 April issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, March 2.