



# The Spirit

Volume 26, Number 11

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

December 2009

## **This Synod Is Blessed!** by **The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop**



I write this having just returned from the fall meeting of the Board of Directors of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in California.

I have represented the bishops of Region 1 (Alaska, Northwest

Washington, Southwestern Washington, Oregon, Eastern Washington and Idaho, and Montana) on this board since my election in 2001. I want to report that this seminary of the church is doing well. Like all institutions of the church it faces significant financial challenges, but it is in a good position to address these issues.

One of the realities that we will face in the coming years is the increasing retirement of good and faithful clergy. The projections for the future envision roughly two-thirds of the current 6,000 active clergy retiring in the next ten years. The current levels of seminary enrollment will not replace 4,000 pastors in that time period without significant increases in student populations and financial support.

After a couple of years of increased enrollments, the seminaries of the ELCA are settling back into the more traditional enrollment levels.

This is not good news for the whole church. It is the congregations of the church that identify, encourage and support these future pastors. Few

pastors speak of being called into ministry without the influence and encouragement of fellow believers, usually in a congregation.

I am proud of this synod's track record. We currently have approximately 75 people enrolled in candidacy for one of the rosters of this church. Not all of these candidates are preparing for ordained ministry. We also have people being called as Diaconal Ministers, Associates in Ministry or Deaconesses. The fact is that we will need all of these candidates.

The Northwest Washington Synod is blessed to be a place where people want to serve. We are not currently experiencing a shortage in potential candidates for our congregations to consider for call. That is not the case throughout the church even today.

I note that my first call to consider ministry came from my kindergarten teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, Marysville, Ohio. She asked who wanted to be a missionary and I put up my hand.

The mission field turned out to be Washington State, but the call came at that early age. We need to be the voice of God's call to those who might serve. It is the communities of faith that raise up these leaders. Now is the time for us to do this work.

*Editor's Note: For information about the ELCA seminaries please visit [www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Education/ELCA-Seminaries.aspx](http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Education/ELCA-Seminaries.aspx).*

# Welcoming The Stranger

by The Rev. Kristy Daniels, Church of Steadfast Love  
(Congregation Under Development)

The Church of Steadfast Love is a mission/development congregation of the ELCA located within the Compass Center. We have been worshipping for over two years now in the heart of the city (two blocks south of the ferry terminal in downtown Seattle, under the viaduct).

We are a very diverse congregation made up of people from all walks of life and from all over the world. We worship bilingually in Spanish and English on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. Due to the nature of the population that we serve, our congregation changes every service; the constants are word and sacrament, grace and community.

Those who attend worship are largely men who are homeless or formerly homeless. They come to worship tired from long days on the streets, from hard days of work, struggling with mental illness or addiction or loneliness.

They come as strangers and find themselves in community, as brothers in Christ. They come hungry for the Word and for good news in a hard and dismal world and they find it in the sharing of the peace and in the sacraments. We continue to grow and to change as new people come seeking a "home" and "sanctuary". We provide these things thanks to the generosity of others.

Our focus is on getting out into the community because everyone needs a chance to give back. We have volunteered at the Immanuel Food Bank, the Duwamish River clean-up, and Join Hands Day at Lutherwood in Bellingham amongst other things. It is important

to feel a part of something and it is really nice when that thing is being a part of a church that loves and cares for us, where we are all equal, not haves and have-nots, but beloved children of God.

Some of the things that we have been able to do, thanks to the generosity of others is create a new worship resource so that we can worship more easily in Spanish and English. We have taken two trips to Holden Village, been able to participate in clean-up days at Lutherwood, and traveled to and participated in the Synod Assembly. We also have some wonderful musicians that participate as members of our congregation and offer music.

Leonard Tullis, a member of the congregation, recently wrote, "Listening to Pastor Kristy Daniels preach out of the Bible helped me understand the way I've always wanted to live-with respect, dignity, and honor. The Church has given me guidance, hope about myself, and has given me my self-respect back."

If you would like to find out more about the congregation or about the Compass Center, please check out our website or join us for worship!

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## Studying The Book Of Acts with Bishop Chris Boerger

Have you had an opportunity to participate in *Studying The Book Of Acts* with Bishop Boerger.

Daily postings of his thoughts and reflections of his reading are easily accessible by going to the synod's website at [www.lutheransnw.org](http://www.lutheransnw.org) and clicking on the box labeled Bible Study.

**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 January 2010 issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, December 2.