



The Spirit

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Shall We Dance? by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



Some of you have already heard this story. For those who have not, this is a warning that this is not the last time that you will hear it. While DeDe and I were in South Africa during my recent sabbatical we had occasion to worship

at the Lutheran Church in Edendale, South Africa. Edendale is a township outside of Pietermaritzburg.

This was the shortest 3.5 hour service of worship I have ever experienced. There were no musical instruments in the building, but the singing was in four-part harmony and was amazing. The service was very similar in liturgical flow to our liturgies.

The point of this story is to reflect on the eleven offerings that took place. It should be noted that Edendale as a township is a place where the poor live. At the time of the offering, plastic containers were placed in front of the congregation.

The church council was invited to come forward with their offering while the congregation sang an African song. As the music started, the council danced forward to give their offerings. After the song was finished the next song was announced and the Sunday School children danced forward with their offering.

Each group was accompanied with a different song. The older men, then the older women, the young men, young women, those who worked in the service industries, those who had a job, those who had a car, the youth of the congregation and finally those who wanted to help pay for the bread and wine used in communion danced forward with their offerings.

This was an act of worship. It was the community joyously sharing, dancing at the opportunity to share in the work of God in their lives, their community, and their church.

At the conclusion of the service, during the announcements, the previous weeks offering total was announced and broken down into the sub-groups. There was accountability among the members of Christ's body.

I learned anew the fact that our offerings are part of our worship. In these days of economic uncertainty, we too often treat our offerings as a business transaction or a bill to pay. The church is just another way we use our discretionary income.

For the people of this congregation in South Africa, the offering was part of their worship experience. It was their turn to respond to what God was doing in their lives. We have much to learn from our sisters and brothers in South Africa. The joy of sharing in God's work is just one of them. Shall we dance?

Here 'n There

- On November 10 **Faith Lutheran in Redmond** held a Veteran's Day Assembly honoring local community veterans. Each branch of the armed services was represented. The assembly sang patriotic songs and prayed over the care packages prepared for men and women currently serving.
- **Two ELCA clergy from the Northwest Washington Synod** are part of the State Leadership Team for the Association of Professional Chaplains. Rev. Karen L. Hanson is the State Representative and Rev. Thomas Wert (Columbia Lutheran Home) is the State Membership Chairperson.
- **Camano Lutheran Church** women have been busy. The total items for the Fall 2010 shipment for Lutheran World Relief were 145 quilts, 492 health kits, 600 school kits, and 45 layettes. This combined with the Spring 2010 shipment made the totals for the year 366 Quilts, 1620 Health Kits, 161 layettes, and 600 school kits.
- **Turkey Trot To Stop Hunger**—Friday, Nov. 26, 8:30-11 a.m. at Green Lake Aqua Theater; more information is available on the synod's website under calendar or you can visit www.turkeytrot4hunger.org.
- **Maritime Chaplains** Vern Hunt, Everett Savage, Darrell Schoen and Paul Tan visit merchant seafarers from around 35 countries on at around 800 ships per year, offering pastoral care and help with day-to-day needs.
- In the afternoons on Mondays **Oak Harbor Lutheran in Oak Harbor** opens its doors to students from Oak Harbor High School, located across the street. Members offer food, fellowship and even a place to do homework. In October, the congregation welcomed as many as 100 students at a time.
- During worship on November 14 **Holy Trinity on Mercer Island** had a blessing of drivers' licenses for those who had recently received their license.
- The youth at **Trinity in Kirkland** made and delivered sandwiches to the residents of Tent City on November 14. Not only was this a great service event but also gave the youth an opportunity to learn more about Tent City. And, on the first Sunday of the month seniors from the congregation serve breakfast for the homeless at the Matt Talbot Center in Seattle.
- **Bethany Lutheran on Bainbridge Island** will be welcoming the Rev. Martin Chan, pastor of Bethany's sister congregation in Chajabal, Guatemala, at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 20.
- **First Evangelical Lutheran in Mount Vernon** collected 108 coats, sweaters, sweatshirts and jackets to benefit Warm Closet in Burlington. The congregation also gave a dozen new scarves and hats made by their Knit & Crochet group.
- **First Lutheran in Bothell** gathered in October to enjoy a Tanzanian dinner and to share photos from their mission trip in June to Tanzania. They currently are raising funds to purchase a kerosene refrigerator and medical supplies.
- **Lord of Life Lutheran in Renton** sent 54 quilts, 51 layettes, 200 school kits and one bolt of fabric to Lutheran World Relief. They also sent 50 quilts to Compass Housing Alliance; and 13 afghans and 8 quilts to Project Linus.
- **Central Lutheran in Bellingham** recently had a *Debt Reduction Organ and Recital Concert* which drew a large crowd and raised \$5,469 towards reducing their organ loan.

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