



The Spirit

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

July 2011

Thank You For Your Gifts by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



As the tornados have devastated the South and Joplin, Missouri, and as the flood waters of the Mississippi threaten much of the Midwest, I am again very thankful for the response of this church. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) has been on the scene quickly

and with the promise of long term support. That is what we do as the church.

In Cullman, Alabama, the ELCA congregation's building was destroyed by the tornado. The congregation's processional cross was found in the yard of an Episcopal family who returned it to the congregation. It was bent, but still usable as a symbol of presence of God in this disaster and the reality of grassroots ecumenism. Peace Lutheran Church in Joplin was totally destroyed with only the front two pillars of the building remaining.

The members of these and other congregations lost property. There was loss of life that impacted the ministry of these congregations and the communities. The congregation in Alabama is served by two pastors who are now working to be the presence of Christ in this community. The congregation in Joplin was in the call process and is served by an interim pastor. This was seen by the synod as a possible site for a seminary graduate. This will now be a most unique venue for someone starting in ministry.

The fact is that the interdependent and

interconnected structure of the ELCA gives us the ability to respond to such disasters with people and with money. The structure of the Southeastern Synod and the Central States Synod means that there are people who are already present in these areas affect by these storms. The money given to LDR goes to those who have been affected by the disaster. The infrastructure costs often come from the synod and churchwide staff already called to serve in these areas. When the earthquake or storm hits this synod, the synod staff will be LDR staff as we respond with the resources of the whole church.

Thank you for your response to these disasters and to those that have preceded these. This is important work that you are doing. It is in your regular mission support that the staff is paid to be on site when a disaster strikes or doing the work of evangelism, call process, conflict management and new mission planning. It is your disaster response gifts that go to provide the needed supplies and care that are the way in which this church responds to disasters.

Thank you for the way in which you support those who find themselves in need.

(Editor's Note: Gifts to ELCA Disaster Response, designated for "U.S. Severe Storms," will be used entirely (100 percent) in response to these disasters. There are three ways to give. By mail: Lutheran Disaster Response, 39330 Treasury Center, Chicago, IL 60694-9300 (write US Severe Storms in memo line). By telephone: 800-638-3522. Online: <https://community.elca.org/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=638>.)

The Storyteller

By Rebecca MacVaugh, LWR

In West Africa, a *griot* is a storyteller, a singer, a history keeper and an agent of cultural change. It is a role honored throughout the region.

Dianne Johnson, Associate in Ministry, at Lord of Life Lutheran in Renton, may not look like your typical griot, but she has joined the West African tradition — and she's telling the story of malaria at churches, synod assemblies and house parties.

It all started when Dianne was asked to post a sign-up sheet for a mission trip to Tanzania. Before she knew it, she joined the trip herself. It would be just the first of three trips to the country to offer her aid in schools and in health clinics through the Lutheran Church in Morogoro, Tanzania.

Dianne was excited to learn about the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), a partnership between LWR, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and United Nations Foundation to end malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. Her congregation...was already active with the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Quilt & Kit Ministry, and the LMI gave her another way to mobilize her friends to help people suffering from malaria. For the full story, visit www.lutheransnw.org and click on Dianne Johnson, griot, under Spotlight.



Dianne Johnson, Associate in Ministry, speaking to members of the Assembly.

(Editor's Note: At this year's Synod Assembly Dianne shared information about malaria and two, low cost, high-impact strategies being used to prevent malaria: bed nets and indoor spraying. She asks that we learn about malaria, share the story and give generously.)

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

At the 2010 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly voting members elected eight people to attend this year's Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Florida. The Churchwide Assembly is from August 15 to August 19.

Voting members are: Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop, Christ the King Lutheran in Snohomish (ex-officio); Georganne Robertson, Synod Vice President, Queen Anne Lutheran in Seattle (ex-officio); Tony Rhodes, Advent Lutheran in Mill Creek; Mark Kremen, University Lutheran in Seattle; Kevin Bates, Advent Lutheran in Mill Creek; Kirby Unti, St. Matthew Lutheran in Renton; Lydia Wittman Grebe, Zion Lutheran in Custer; Elaine Harrison, Faith Lutheran in Seattle; Kim Unti, St Matthew Lutheran in Renton; and John Grebe, Zion Lutheran in Custer.

The theme at this year's assembly is *Freed in Christ to Serve*. Legislative highlights include: elections; memorials; consideration of the ELCA Malaria Campaign; consideration of the document *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*; consideration of the recommendations from the Living into the Future Together (LIFT) Task Force; and amendments to the constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions of the ELCA. Details are available at www.elca.org.

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