



The Spirit

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

February 2011

How Healthy Is Your Pastor? by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



How healthy is your pastor?

That may not be the first question you would ask, but it is one that needs to be asked. This year, for the third straight year, the ELCA Board of Pensions is conducting a Health Risk Assessment for all of its

members, rostered or members of their families. This is a private screening that will result in money being placed in a Health Savings account.

The other fact is that if 65% of the plan members in this Synod complete the assessment by April 30, the congregations and institutions of the synod will see a 2% reduction in health premiums for the year.

In 2010 that would have seen approximately \$32,000 remain in synod congregations. We did not reach the 65% threshold in either of the past two years.

Now is the time for our leaders to take the assessment. I have taken mine. I will be encouraging my spouse to take the assessment. It is for both rostered leaders and for family members who are covered by the plan. When DeDe and I have both taken the assessment we will have \$150 each credited to our account. When 65% of the plan members of this synod take the assessment, then the cost of the premiums for this care will be reduced by 2%.

We have known for several years that the clergy of the ELCA have significant risk factors

for poor health. It would be wonderful if all of our rostered leaders and their families would use the resources of the plan to grow in their awareness of what would make them healthier.

I know that I need to lose weight. I also know that I need to increase my physical exercise. The health risk assessment told me what I already knew. That is the point. I need that reminder and that encouragement.

It is very easy for us to dismiss the risk assessment. That is why there is a financial incentive for both the participants in the program and for their sponsoring congregations. In this time of financial uncertainty it is hoped that a financial incentive will motive us to take that first step.

In the past two months, three of my colleague bishops have been hospitalized with cardiac symptoms. Fortunately all three had diagnoses that served as wake up calls for them and for the rest of us.

I would hope that I am smart enough to hear the call to take care of myself without the trip to the emergency room. Maybe the financial incentive to the synod treasurer might encourage me to take the appropriate steps, like taking the health risk assessment. Maybe having fellow believers asking about my health will keep me moving in the positive direction.

So how is your health?

Editor's Note: The link to the ELCA Board of Pensions Healthy Risk Assessment can be found on the Synod's website's homepage: www.lutheransnw.org.

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.

In sub-Saharan Africa, one in five childhood deaths is due to malaria. And AIDS has claimed the lives of more than 25 million people worldwide with sub-Saharan Africa hardest hit by this pandemic. Learn how the ELCA is responding at www.lutheransnw.org/assembly. This year's Assembly will require voting members to elect members to the Consultation Committee and the Discipline Committee.

Nominations and resolutions are due to the Synod Office by March 1. The Resolution

and Nomination Forms are available on the homepage (under Spotlight) as well as on the Synod Assembly page.

As material becomes available, documents will be posted on-line on the assembly website. Material will not be mailed to congregations prior to the assembly. (Notebooks with the materials posted on the website will be available at the Assembly.)

Voting members, observers, and visitors will again need to *register on-line* through the synod's website.

Please check back to the synod's website often at **www.lutheransnw.org/assembly**.

Assembly Co-Coordinators are Carolyn Norton, member at St. Luke's in Bellevue, and Debi Gatto, member at Glendale Lutheran in Burien. They can be reached at synodassembly@lutheransnw.org.

Here 'n There

- Check out the new **Living Lutheran** website. LivingLutheran.com is a place where ELCA members across the US can go for fresh, daily stories of inspiration and conversation about what it means to be Lutheran.
- In January **Faith Lutheran in Everett** presented checks to support their five ministry partners who the congregation recognizes as doing the Lord's work to sever their neighbors in need. Their ministry partners are: Bethany of the Northwest, Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County, the South Everett Neighborhood Center/Familias Unitas and Lutheran World Hunger. This year members also donated to the burn victim center.
- On March 19 members of **First in Bothell** will celebrate their 125th anniversary with a banquet.
- On January 29 the High School Youth at **Faith Lutheran in Seattle** will be sorting food, assisting clients in picking up food and whatever else needs to be done to help the clients at North Helpline Food Bank in Lake City.
- Members at **Our Redeemer Lutheran in Seattle** put together Move-Out Kits. These kits are given to residents of the Compass'

Men's Program when they move out. The kit contains the essentials to create a new home. And, the High School Youth recently fed more than 100 residents of Tent City III!

- **Central in Everett** gave 106 Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets needy families. The total marks their 106 years as a congregation.

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.

Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA

5519 Phinney Ave North
Seattle, WA 98103-5829

Telephone: 206-783-9292

Toll Free: 1-800-244-6997

Fax: 206-783-9833

Email: office@lutheransnw.org

Editor: Margit Peiffle

Email: margit@lutheransnw.org

Telephone: 425-299-6667

Website: www.lutheransnw.org

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