



The Spirit

Volume 29, Number 6

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

July 2012

The Work Of The Whole Church

by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



Thank you to all who worked to make this year's Synod Assembly so successful. It was good to see the church at work as we received reports, acted on resolutions, were inspired by Mark Allan Powell and as we gathered to

worship. From the perspective of the chair of the assembly, this was a positive and productive assembly.

One of the pastors of this synod commented to me during a break that it was going to be hard to choose between supporting the synod staff with appropriate salaries and responding to the malaria campaign, and the other special requests that came during the assembly. That is often the tension that we feel. How do we support the basic infrastructure of the organization and respond to the compelling and essential appeals that come to us on a daily basis?

I have heard Dr. Powell at a stewardship workshop speak of the difference between our tithes and our offerings. Often we use those terms interchangeably. Powell suggests from a Biblical perspective tithes were a person's

commitment to the regular cost of doing business for the church. As a member of the church I commit to supporting my local congregation, the synod and the churchwide organization. I tithe my income to support the work of God through these expressions of the church.

Powell continued to say that offerings were what I give to the special appeals that come to my attention and merit my response. These are over and above my tithe. So giving to the Malaria Campaign, World Hunger, Capital Campaigns, etc. compete for my offerings.

My guess is that most of us lump all of our giving into the category of offerings and seldom, if ever, consider a tithe. If we tithe, our offerings are subtracted from our regular giving so that the goal of 10% is achieved. The fact is that ELCA members give less than 3% of their income to the church so a tithe, divided between support of the church and the special causes, would still not challenge our giving potential.

I do believe that we need to talk about tithes and offerings. How do we support the work of the whole church? How do we respond to specific needs at a given time? This is an important conversation. It is not just about our money. It is also about how we live out our faith.

2012 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly

Information from this year's Assembly is available online at www.lutheransnw.org/assembly/2012. On that page you will find links for election, resolution and amendment results. Additional information includes news articles

as well as photos taken during the two-day assembly.

The 2013 Synod Assembly will include a Bishop election. A timeline from the Bishop Election Task Force is also available online.

Noisy Cans Making A Difference

It's been a year since the *Noisy Can Kids* began their campaign to raise awareness and money for malaria at Our Saviour's Lutheran in Arlington.

Maddie, age 8, heard how malaria affects children, and even kills them, in Africa. She learned about this from Pastor Paul Anderson who told the *stories* using the *Story People* (see photo caption at right). Maddie didn't feel this was right and wanted to do something. And she did.

The *Noisy Can Kids* shake their cans every other week during offering at worship. The more coins, the more noise the better because it means money to help fight malaria.



The African Village where a child is added each time the Noisy Cans have \$50.

Each time the kids raise \$50 another child is added to their African Village poster. And, their village is growing! They have raised more than \$1,146 and that means Maddie and her friends have provided life saving mosquito nets to 114 families.

As Maddie's mom told her, "Even one person can make a big difference." And Maddie has.

(<http://blogs.elca.org/malaria/post/the-noisy-can-kids-16>)



When voting members arrived at the 2011 Assembly they found cardboard cutouts of "Story People" on every chair. Decorated by students of Faith Lutheran Church in Redmond and Glendale Lutheran Church in Burien, and the congregation at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Bellevue, each cardboard cutout told a story of a child affected by HIV/AIDS or Malaria.

Summer 2012 Is Here Which Means ELCA Youth Gathering

At least 17 congregations from our synod will be sending youth to New Orleans, LA, where they will join others from around the U.S. to attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering.

In 2010 the Gathering was also held in New Orleans with 40,000 youth attended. Hurricane Katrina had ravaged the city in 2005. Service projects were completed by the youth, impressing the community of New Orleans with how much the youth was able to accomplish.

This year's Gathering is built around three core practices in which young people will be immersed before and during the Gathering, and again, in the communities of their congregations.

The core practices are discipleship, peacemaking and justice. These practices serve to accentuate God's greatest commandment: to love the Lord our God and our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:34-40).

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: 206-783-9292

Website: www.lutheransnw.org

Information for the August issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Tuesday, July 3.