



The Spirit

Volume 28, Number 9

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

October 2011

Are We Ready To Be Moved By The Holy Spirit? by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson commented in his closing remarks at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly that in some ways this was the first assembly of this church. It was the 12th, but I think in many ways he is correct.

This was an assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America (ELCA). We have a clear sense of whose and who we are. We have identified that we are a church that is going to work through congregations as evangelical mission sites. We are going to be advocates for God's reign and God's justice in the world. This is our task in the coming years.

I am always inspired by the work God is doing through the ELCA. We are a church that is involved in the world with God's word of salvation, freedom and hope. We are a church that acts in bold ways around the world with our companions in the Lutheran World Federation. We are a church that responds when disasters strike with our money and with our sweat. We are a church that knows the unity of Christ and is serving as the bridge to bring other members of Christ's family to the table.

We are a young church. We came into existence in 1988. In our 23 years of life, we have taken the strengths of our predecessor bodies and become much more than a sum of those parts. Our full communion partners have watched with appreciation as we have used a lengthy process to develop social statements. Some have even borrowed our work to use in their deliberations. This year we were given greetings by the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. This

traditional African American descent church is the first such denomination to seek dialog and cooperation with the ELCA. We also heard from Sayyid Sayeed of the Islamic Society of North America. This marked the first time we have been greeted by a representative of Islam.

Every day we stopped before lunch to gather around word and sacrament in worship. The sound of almost 2,000 Lutherans singing and praying is in itself inspirational. But this is who we are. We are a people who gather to hear God and receive God's grace so that we can be the Body of Christ in the world.

I would hope that you had an opportunity to watch parts of the assembly as it was streamed on the internet. This year we saw the church with its youthful face as more than 12% of the members of the assembly were less than 30 years of age. These were not bashful youth. They spoke at the microphones and they worked the halls with their questions and their convictions. The church is in good hands with these young leaders.

I came home from this assembly fully aware of the challenges we face as a denomination and as part of Christ's church. The tasks are daunting. As Bishop Hanson challenged us in his opening sermon on Monday, "Are we ready, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for the Holy Spirit to move us as the Spirit moved Mary?" Preaching on the annunciation he challenged us to be moved by the Holy Spirit. That is how the church will serve in the days ahead. I pray that the Spirit will move in each of our congregations and that we will share this movement with the world.

Hope Sparkles In Our Sanctuary

by Dan Moody, Project Co-chair, Edmonds Lutheran In Edmonds

What started out as a 'How do we get our people to wear their name tags' discussion turned into a public relations and fundraising project for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) at Edmonds Lutheran Church, Edmonds.

Following an inspiring presentation by Dianne Johnson at the Synod Assembly, and encouraging words from the leaders of Edmonds Lutheran, a committee was formed to see how we could expand our little nametag- fellowship project into a discernment and resource building partnership for LMI.

With the Synod Assembly not even a day behind us, we filled our pews with hand-crafted cardboard cut-out 'malaria awareness children', made by local Lutheran School classes. Each 'child' carried a tag with the name of an African child and their situation, allowing for appreciation of the situation and inviting involvement through prayer. Some of the LMI children went home with members, while others remained on duty in the coming weeks providing familiarity and recognition of LMI's mission.

During June, our International Mission awareness month, we saw the development of our expanded efforts to keep the drive close

to our hearts and in our minds. LMI lanyards of orange (the color of hope) and yellow (steadfast loyalty) were distributed to Family Fun Night participants.

These simple visual tokens were an instant hit, as ELC nametags were affixed to the lanyards the following Sunday. LMI children were used in Sunday school lessons and a Children's Sermon was held under an LMI mosquito bed net.

With understanding of the LMI efforts growing, a display booth was created with informational materials and lanyards were offered for donations. More than \$400 was raised to purchase mosquito bed nets for the children in Africa. Now on any given Sunday, the congregation is made visually vibrant by the steadfast loyalty and hope that sparkle our sanctuary during services.



Edmonds Lutheran member Alice Smith standing next to the "End Malaria" booth.



Myself with two children from Sunday School showing off our lanyards.



Children's sermon under the mosquito net.

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 November issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, October 5.