



The Spirit

Volume 27, Number 6

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

July 2010

Being A Disciple by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



For the past few months I have been writing about the church returning to a discipleship model from a membership model.

The reason for this shift is based on the fact that institutions, like the church, are no longer drawing

long-term loyalty in this society. It is even more important that the church has always been made up of disciples. We confess that we are more than members, we are under the reign of God and we are about the work of God in the world.

How does one become a disciple?

I need to quickly point out that the making of disciples is the work of the Holy Spirit. There are spiritual disciplines that the Spirit uses to increase faith and frame our work. The disciplines of prayer, Bible Study and worship are where we begin in this calling.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been engaged in the *Book of Faith Initiative* for three years. This is more than a program; this is about a basic element of being a disciple.

We need to be engaged in the intentional study of scripture as individuals and in our congregational communities. As Lutheran Christians we understand the Bible to be the cradle of Christ. We go to the scripture to find Jesus and to know the will of God for us and the world.

Prayer is also essential to our life together and to our life in Christ.

As I read the story of God's people I am in awe of the honesty of the disciples prayers. Abraham engages God in an auction over the safety of Lot's family and in the face of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moses reminds God that the people of Israel are God's people when they grumble against God and Moses. Jeremiah uses poetry to question the faithfulness of God in a moment of despair. There are also the prayers of the early church that sustain the community in the face of arrest, persecution and even death.

Prayer is more about relationship than requests. It is the way in which we live out the promises of God to be with us in all of our life. That includes our joyous, our tragic and our bored moments. It is a mark of our life in Christ that we share our lives in prayer with our God.

Our celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are also essential to our life of discipleship. We come together as a community of disciples to be forgiven, healed and transformed for the life we are called to live.

Discipleship is a practice that is nourished and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace.

The word and sacraments are the means that are used for bringing us into the work and will of God. Discipleship is a way of life. It is also a practice that needs to be nourished and sustained by our study, our prayer and our worship.

Here 'n There

- A new GIFT group was formed at **Phinney Ridge Lutheran in Seattle** for families and individuals touched by a corner of the adoption triangle. Gathered around scripture, fellowship, service and the chosen topic (adoption) they explore the unique experience of adoption from many perspectives. The group is led by Patrick Meagher, Minister of Outreach at Phinney, and an adoptee.
- **Immanuel in Seattle** reaches out to its surrounding community with a food bank, lunch program, shelter, hygiene center and recovery center. In order to support that ministry, **University in Seattle** hosted a benefit concert in May. The concert, called Music Without Borders, featured the world flute master, Gary Stroutsos, and percussionist, David Revelli.
- Members at **First Lutheran in Mount Vernon** recently collected more than 500 lbs. of food for the Neighbors in Need Food Bank. The congregation also provides a dinner once a month at Friendship House, a shelter for the homeless. And, the money raised at the congregation's Easter Breakfast (\$1,493.19) was donated to Reverie BBQ in Mount Vernon. The last five days of every month the restaurant's owners provide a free dinner to the working poor who discover there is month left and they have run out of money.
- Members at **Faith in Lakewood** are participating in the ELCA's *Good Gifts...* the congregation is raising \$2,500 in order to dig, drill and install a well for clean water.
- The Sunday School students at **Bethany on Bainbridge Island** collected more than 80 comfort kits (formerly known as hygiene kits) for Lutheran World Relief.
- **Saint Andrew's in Bellevue** held their annual fundraising dinner and auction to help provide housing for low-income residents living on the eastside. More than 400 people attended, raising \$250,000.
- **Holy Spirit in Kirkland** has a *Safe Haven Policy* to guide adults as they interact with minors in all church-related activities. The

policy is designed to: educate staff and volunteers about their role in abuse and injury prevention; provide general procedures that reduce the risks of abuse or injury; and implement a method of effective response should an incident occur.

- **Faith in Seattle** participated in the local Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Ingathering. The congregation provided 86 quilts, 39 health kits, 14 layettes and nine school kits.
- Members at **Zion in Kent** also made quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR): 227 quilts were made. Of these, 205 were shipped to LWR and the remainder to be donated locally. They also shipped 206 health kits.
- **Lord of Life in Renton** award \$5,300 in scholarships for the 2010-2011 school year to ten deserving students. Funds come from donations and the Safeway Script program.
- Jon and Juni Nelson, **members of Central in Seattle**, received the Evergreen Justice Award from LPPO . This award is given to those who exhibit an outstanding commitment to strive for peace and justice in all the earth.
- Did you attend the **2010 Synod Assembly**? Have you completed our survey? If not, please do. You can find the link on the synod website's homepage: www.lutheransnw.org.

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

Information for the August issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, June 30.