



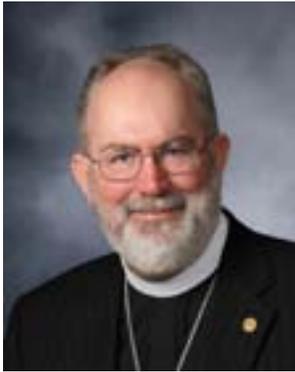
The Spirit

Volume 29, Number 1

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

January 2012

A Good Creation Of God by The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop



In short, we confessed that legitimate civil ordinances are good creations of God and divine ordinances in which a Christian may safely take part.¹

Last November I participated in the annual visit of ELCA

bishops with members of Congress and the White House staff in Washington D.C. This year I began my conversation with them by referencing Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession. I reminded them that Lutherans see government to be a “good creation of God” and as such working for the good of all creation and its creatures.

Frankly that introduction seemed to catch those involved in government by surprise. In the middle of the partisan posturing that is occurring in halls of government this belief that those who are called to the vocation of leader are a gift from God is not part of our political dialog.

As we begin a year that will be dominated by political campaigns and advertising, I pray that we might bring this understanding to our body politic. Understanding that good order and the common good is in fact a gift from God does change the way we talk about government.

This does not mean that one side in our political debates can claim theirs is the God given position. Rather it sees the whole process and all of those we elect as stewards of a call from God for the good of all.

I am convinced that we need to be reminded that as we think about the problems facing the world, our country, state or local community, we are part of something far beyond ourselves. God is at work in the world and we are called to share in that work.

Luther defines the creative activity of God as not just calling the world into being, but also “*daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life.*”⁴⁸ *God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!*”¹

The work of government is God’s work. Government does not have the task of preaching the gospel. That is still the task of the church. Caring for the creation and for all people is the reason that God calls leaders to serve in government.

So, as you exercise your political vocation this year, listen to how those running for office will exercise this call from God for the good of God’s world.

¹Kolb, R. 2000. *The Book of Concord : The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Fortress Press: Minneapolis

Here 'n There

- On Thanksgiving Day volunteers from Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches (REACH) Hosted their annual Thanksgiving Dinner at **Luther's Table**. The 15 volunteers served more than 175 people and the meal included the standard Thanksgiving fixings. They plan on opening up their doors again on Christmas Day from 1 to 3 p.m. to serve food to guests and family members. Have you visited Luther's Table? They are located at 419 S. 2nd St. Suite 1, Renton, WA 98057; 425-970-3157; www.lutherstable.com. Luther's Table is a mission start of the Northwest Washington Synod.
- "Every time the bold men rose up, they rose up with guns," says **Liberian Lutheran Leymah Roberta Gbowee**, winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. Read Leymah's story by visiting www.elca.org and clicking on "Living Lutheran." (<http://www.livinglutheran.com/stories/a-nonviolent-warrior-for-peace.html>.)
- **Members at Mount Si Lutheran in North Bend** are sharing Jesus Christ with needy children through Operation Christmas Child. This program brings joy and happiness to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes and the Good News of God's love.
- **Members at Faith Lutheran in Redmond** collected more than 42 Thanksgiving Bags that were sent to men and women currently serving in the armed forces.
- **Luther Memorial in Seattle** hosted their first week as an overnight shelter for guests from Mary's Place (Nov. 29 - Dec. 6). The congregation provided a safe place for 2 moms and 11 children, ages eight months to 16 years old. Karen Olsen, who organized the event, said, "It was the most rewarding thing I have ever done. We got much more back than we gave." Members provided evening meals and breakfasts, and gave the guests a warm place to do homework, play games, read, relax and sleep.
- **Holy Spirit Lutheran in Kirkland** will be hosting Tent City 4 from January 21 - April 21. The youth at Holy Spirit will cook and serve

a meal for 75 men who temporarily call the Compass Center "home" on January 22.

- **Holy Trinity Lutheran on Mercer Island** will hold a special worship service at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18. This service will be a quiet celebration of the Christmas season and is being offered especially for those who, because of grief or some other heartache, would like a more quiet and reflective worship. It is also an opportunity to take a step back from all the hustle and bustle of the season and to experience the peace of worship and prayer.
- **Members of University Lutheran in Seattle** are holding their annual *Walk With The Magi on the Day of Epiphany* (Friday, Jan. 6). They will gather for the Magi story at 6 p.m. at the church, followed by the journey of following the star to find baby Jesus. The walk will be followed by a simple meal and the traditional smashing of the pinata.
- **Our Saviour's Lutheran in Arlington** is a designated Cold Weather shelter and is open from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when the temperature dips below 32 degrees or lower. **Kent Lutheran Church in Kent** is also a cold weather shelter.

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 February issue of *The Spirit* is due to the Synod Office by Wednesday, January 4.