

2011 Synod Assembly

Help Them Touch Jesus' Garment (Mark 6:56)



Northwest Washington Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.

Friday, May 13, 2011

Welcome!

by **The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Bishop**



Welcome to the 24th Assembly of the Northwest Washington Synod. Under the theme *Help them touch Jesus' Garment*, we will hear about the global health initiatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

It may come as a surprise to some of us that this church is an active player in fighting the scourges of HIV/AIDS and Malaria. These killer diseases are active in Africa, South America and Asia. Our outreach to the world must address these diseases as we share the gospel of Jesus and the compassion of God.

I have said before that the purpose of a Synod Assembly is threefold. First, we come to worship. We are the church. As Lutherans we define the church as people assembled around the proclamation of the word and the sharing of the sacraments. For these two days we will be first the church in worship and in prayer.

The second purpose of an Assembly is education. We will hear from Dr. Ruanne V. Barnabas. Dr. Barnabas is the Acting Clinical Instructor in the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington. She brings experience from working in Sub-Saharan Africa and researches how to address the health issues the world faces.

In this education component of the Assembly we will break into workshops. These workshops will be opportunities for addressing issues related to our theme or issues related to congregational ministry in this time. These are important times for us to learn from each other and to have opportunity to ask questions in those areas that interest us.

Finally this Synod Assembly is the annual meeting of the synod. The synod is the more than 40,000 baptized people of God who are the members of the congregations in this geography. The synod is not the Bishop's office or the Synod Council. We are the servants of the people whom you represent and who are really the synod. We will elect members of the Consultation and the Discipline Committees. These are rarely used, but essential to our life together if circumstances dictate their use. We will act on the 2012 budget, resolutions and constitutional amendments that are submitted for our consideration; and we will hear reports of the activities of the officers, council and ministries of the synod. We will do the business of the synod as the church.

Welcome to this threefold work. You are members of this Assembly. You are not removed from your home congregation. Yet, you will be asked to bring your best thinking, praying and vision to make decisions for the Northwest Washington Synod. I pray the Holy Spirit's guidance for you and for all of us as we gather as the Northwest Washington Synod in Assembly.

Dear Gathered Assembly Members and Visitors

Welcome to the 2011 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly in Lynnwood. From the time you pick up your nametag you will be learning how and why we need to *Help them Touch Jesus' Garment*. Your nametag bears the red awareness ribbon of AIDS/HIV along with the blue awareness ribbon of Malaria.

This year's assembly focuses not only on the business issues of the synod but the education, of those gathered, on the importance that we as a church body become aware of and support the ELCA Strategy on HIV/AIDS and the ELCA Malaria campaigns.

From our keynote speaker and others; stories from those affected; and videos and workshops our goal is to have you come away with an understanding of these strategies; what you and your congregation can do to and where to find resources to *Help them Touch Jesus' Garment*.

There are added incentives this year to make it a little easier to walk down those stairs to the vendor displays (an elevator is available for those who need it), but you will have to go down there first to see what those might be.

In case you are not familiar with the Lynnwood Convention Center, the vendor displays are directly below the assembly meeting hall. Please avail yourselves of the time they are giving to bring you information from their various organizations.

Workshops will be offered on Saturday morning and afternoon. The Saturday morning sessions are all on aspects of Evangelism. The Saturday afternoon sessions are more focused on the assembly theme (Malaria/HIV-Aids, global missions, post-disaster redevelopment, and hunger). Please plan to stay and participate in these workshops.

As we welcome you, we also encourage you to get to know others attending this year's assembly; introduce yourself to someone you didn't know before you came as well as renewing the friendships with those you have met in previous years.

We are all one Body and the assembly is a wonderful venue for becoming more involved in the work of the church.

Carolyn Norton and Debi Gatto
2011 Synod Assembly Co-Chairs

Together In Word And Sacrament

Song, Scripture, Prayer, Meal. All are integral parts of our worship. As we come together for this assembly we are reminded that Jesus cared deeply for the sick, the suffering, and the dying.

The 2011 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly's theme *Help Them Touch Jesus' Garment*, based on Mark 6:56, will provide one of the main thrusts for our liturgical celebrations.

Prayers for physical and spiritual healing, laying on of hands and anointing with oil will accompany our rejoicing in Word and Sacrament. We will celebrate God's power in our lives and in the world. We will trust in God's deliverance!

This year's Scriptures will undergird our communal prayers: the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman who said, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed"; the curing of Naaman by Elisha; James' admonition to us all, "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well".

And let us not forget the pivotal truth of our Gospel for both days that whispers in our ears: "Do not worry, Death has been conquered".

Trusting in God's deliverance, we will sing boldly, hear the Word attentively, pray for each other fervently and share a meal joyfully.

Both of our worship services will offer Holy Communion and both services will be reminiscent of the old Lutheran Chorale Service, but with an updated musical disposition.

At Friday's service Bishop Chris Boerger will preach and Pastor Jimmy Hao will preside. Friday's service could be characterized as hymn-based, while at Saturday's service we will sing songs of a more contemporary vein. Our preacher on Saturday will be Twila Shock and Bishop Boerger will preside.

Music at both celebrations will be led by Omaldo Perez along with the members of the music ministry at First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach.

Resolutions and Amendments

	Description	Pass	Fail	Other
	Term Limits			
	Campus Ministry			
Amendment 62	To add provision for electronic or telephone conference meetings of the Synod Council			

The Assembly's Focus This Year

In 2009 members of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to focus on two worldwide issues: malaria and HIV/AIDS. The focus at this year's Synod Assembly is about those two issues and we hope that during this Assembly you will learn how your congregation can participate in these two global health initiatives.

Malaria

Unless you are a world traveler, odds are that you know very little about malaria. For most Americans this disease is out of site and out of mind, or simply a bothersome addition to precautions one must take while traveling abroad.

Unfortunately for 40% of the world's population malaria is a constant threat to their health and their children's health. This disease fills up hospitals and takes away economic resources from nations that could be investing those dollars in infrastructures to improve access to clean water, education and health care. Perhaps most heartbreaking is that, although malaria is preventable and curable, in 2009 nearly 800,000 people lost their lives to this disease. Most of these deaths were children under five years old or pregnant women.

So what impact could we possibly make in changing the impact of malaria in our world?

The ELCA has globally joined with many partners in an action plan to combine resources across the public and private sectors. In using the strengths of government, faith-based and nonprofit organizations the plan aims to eliminate deaths from malaria over the next few years.

Through low cost/high impact interventions the cases of malaria across the globe are already beginning to decline. Several African nations have seen rates of

transmission drop by 50%. Malaria has been eliminated from countries in the past (including the US).

Stop by the display table downstairs with the bed net and learn how you and your congregation can be a part of the solution through ELCA World Hunger and The Lutheran Malaria Initiative. More information on what the ELCA is doing can be found at www.elca.org/malaria.

HIV/AIDS

Named the "single greatest reversal in human development" in modern times, the HIV and AIDS crisis has claimed more than 25 million lives. But amid the sobering realities of HIV and AIDS there is cause for great hope.

We are seeing real progress in efforts to: halt the spread of HIV through effective prevention, treatment, and care; eliminate the stigma and discrimination experienced by those who are HIV-positive; and reduce the conditions of poverty that contribute to the spread of HIV. More information about what the ELCA is doing can be found at www.elca.org/aids.

Why the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS?

- † Each day, more than 6,800 people become HIV-positive, and more than 5,700 people die from AIDS.
- † There are 33.2 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide, 1.2 million in the US.
- † AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 12 million children under the age of 18 in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- † In countries hardest hit by HIV, life expectancy has declined by 20 years, poverty has deepened, and economic growth has been reversed.

2011 Synod Assembly Welcome Newsletter'

Throughout the Assembly find highlights and photographs at www.lutheransnw.org.

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News and Notes

- † **Seating Arrangements for Voting Members**—Seating arrangements in the Plenary Hall are in classroom style, i.e. you will be seated at long tables all facing the front of the room, with two aisles. Microphones are available for Voting Members and Observers who wish to speak to the assembly.
- † **Seating Arrangements for Visitors and Observers**—Chairs are available on the perimeter of the room for your use.
- † **Lunch**—Lunch is not provided this year. A flyer with nearby restaurants is available in your notebook.
- † **Opening Worship**—Opening Worship will take place at 10 a.m. on Friday with Bishop Chris Boerger preaching and the Rev. Jianhua Jimmy Hao, Grace Chinese Lutheran Church in Seattle, will preside.
- † **Festival Worship**—The Festival Worship Service will take place on Saturday at 10:45 a.m. with Bishop Chris Boerger presiding and the Rev. Twila Schock preaching.
- † **Resolutions**—If the Standing Rules are adopted by the 2011 Assembly, all resolutions to be considered must be received by the Reference and Counsel Committee no later than noon on Friday, May 13, 2011.
- † **Displays**—Displays are located on the lower level of the Convention Center. An elevator is available at the information desk as you come into the Center on the main floor.
- † **Offering**—This year's offering will be divided in the following manner: 40 percent to the ELCA Malaria Campaign and the ELCA HIV/AIDS Initiative, 40 percent to African Americans Reach and Teach Health [AARTH], and 20 percent to be divided equally between our companion synods.
- † **Coffee**—Coffee served during the 2011 Synod Assembly is fair trade coffee.
- † **Real-Time Captioning**—Real-Time Captioning will be available in the Plenary Hall on Friday and Saturday. The screen is located in the front on the right side of the hall.
- † **Hearing Devices**—Hearing devices are available from the Lynnwood Convention Center. (You will need to leave your driver's license as insurance. At the end of the day, when you return the listening device, you will receive your driver's license.)
- † **Thank You**—Please give all the volunteers a special thank you! This assembly would not be possible without their help.

An Opportunity For Learning

This year's synod assembly will give attendees an opportunity for learning on Saturday morning and afternoon. Workshops will take place in the rooms downstairs as well as in the plenary hall. An elevator is available for those who might need it.

Topics for the morning workshops are: Missing Generations, Community Connections, Fostering a Climate of Hospitality, Assessing Your Congregation's Future, Discovering your Congregation's DNA and Vital Worship.

Topics for the afternoon workshops are: Global Missions and our Companion Synods, the Haiti Project: Response Ability Builders, Emanuel Wish Foundation (South Africa), Hunger and Malaria, our New Mission Starts, and Publicity Grant Presentations. A flyer with details will be available.