



LUNCHEON MEETING
Thursday, February 2, 2012—12:00 noon

Saint Luke Lutheran Church
9100 Colesville Road at Dale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Bishop Richard H. Graham
Metropolitan Washington DC Synod, ELCA

"A Bishop's Reflections
(What I Know Now that I Didn't Know Then)"

The Rev. Richard H. Graham was elected to a six-year term as bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the ELCA on June 8, 2007, by the 2007 Synod Assembly. He took office on September 1, 2007, and was installed on October 14, 2007.

Bishop Graham most recently served as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in College Park, Maryland. Additionally, he has been Assistant Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hagerstown, Maryland; and Associate Pastor of St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Annapolis, Maryland.

Bishop Graham received a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1977 and a Master of Arts degree in Church History from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. in 1989.

Prior local leadership included as synod secretary, member of the synod's Candidacy Committee and member of the Board of Trustees of the National Lutheran Home for the Aged, Rockville, Maryland.

Bishop Graham succeeded the Rev. Theodore F. Schneider who retired from the position after serving two terms following his election in 1995.

Bishop Graham is married to Nancy Ann Graham and has two adult daughters.



Announcements

We celebrated Beverly Jacobs' birthday, 28 February and the 47th Anniversary for the Knutsen's.

First time attendees were Catherine Burrell, Harold Wilder and Beverly Jacobs.

The devotion was led by Bishop Graham based on Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. “It was brought to his mind by hearing about a young political candidate facing an older audience like a sheep among wolves. He made the point that Jesus did not indicate it would be just an occasional thing but that we would be constantly like sheep among wolves. We should act wisely but benevolently constantly..

Ellie Wegener encouraged support of the Capitol Hill Career Support group, announced the LLF membership drive and mentioned a memoir writing group in DC meeting Thursday evenings with a flyer available on the details.

Faith Coddling, Fellowship Square, announced that they are getting a new executive director and asked for prayers for her.

Pastor Berg mentioned a Care Giver's Open House, 12 February at St. Luke's in Silver Springs, MD from 2-4 or at St. John's Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA on 4 March. He also invited attendance at a forum on “Vibrant Living, Vibrant Faith: Inspiring a New Culture of Senior Ministry” to be held at the Rockville campus of Johns Hopkins University on May 17, 2012. It will offer an insightful, inter-faith, multidimensional forum as a resource for clergy, lay leaders and all those working with seniors to network and partner together, learn new tips for creativity enhancing senior ministry as well as collectively tackle some of the challenges.

Presentation

Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington DC Synod, ELCA **"A Bishop's Reflections (What I Know Now that I Didn't Know Then)"**

The common experience as Lutheran Christians here in the metropolitan DC area is applicable to both ELCA and LCMS. All the congregations he has served have been in Maryland and became a member of this synod by accident when they carved out the new synod around Washington after reorganizing into ELCA. He was the secretary of the convention when he was elected and thoroughly convinced that they had made a mistake but has turned out very well for the family.

He has learned four lessons in his time as bishop:

- 1) Never be elected right before a major economic downturn. There are congregations that predate the Revolutionary War but most started as a result of the influx of federal workers as the federal government expanded. Many were built too close together so they are small and struggling in the current economy as well the longer term change in how people support churches, e.g. Younger people support causes rather than institutions.
- 2) Never be elected when the church wants to talk so much about sex. He thinks the ELCA made the right decisions but in the wrong way with respect to sex or sexual orientation of pastors. It did prompt a serious look at how the ELCA makes their decisions about difficult things and is on a task force (Living into the future together, LIFT) working on how to become of one mind in the church. The Lutheran church in the US is being reborn through emigrants from Africa and South America and they also need pastors who can speak their native language for the emigrants and English for their children.
- 3) Never become a bishop when a lot of the pastors are retiring. Not easy for congregations and pastors who have been together for many years to transition. The congregations are challenged to keep pastors and momentum going. In some churches the call committee is a standing committee because the turnover is so great. Many don't understand that they need to pray and seek the Lord's guidance rather than hiring someone who just meets their criteria and also don't expect them to remain for 40 years. These are anxious times for Christian congregations in general since many of those with checkbooks are now not in the church since they grew up during the Vietnam era and didn't see the value of church.
- 4) Never give up hope as he has had a lot of fun being bishop. This is a good time for Lutheran Christians where people are ready to hear a nonjudgemental like ours where God has set us all free even though we are all sinners. By and large main line religious organizations have a duty to witness in the community and will meet a positive reaction. There is a rebirth of urban life in DC and Baltimore with great opportunity. They are looking at partnering between churches to share resources and pay less heed to our denominational boundaries and share ideas for success. We need to trust that no service rendered to our Lord is ever wasted and count on the fact that if we let the Lord work through us, it will be fine. Bishops are middle judicatory heads per dictionary so it was more fun than he had expected. He is undecided on whether he will open to a second term when his six year initial term is over.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney Smith

UNEMPLOYED?

IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US

The Capitol Hill Career Support Group

Offers Helpful, Compassionate &
Practical Sharing



Every Monday Evening 7:00 - 8:30 pm
First Trinity Lutheran Church
309 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

At front of church, door on left, ring bell on left.
Come up two flights to library to join group.

Sponsored by
The Employment Support Center

1556 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-628-2919
escjobclubs@yahoo.com
www.angelfire.com .

MEMOIR WRITING



Group forming:

October 20 at 7:00p.m.

**Georgetown Lutheran
Church**

**1556 Wisconsin
Avenue N.W.**

MEMOIR WRITING GROUP

What is your story? A group of people is forming who want to work on their memoirs. Whether you wish to write essays, short stories, or a book about the incidents of your life, you are welcome. This group will be led by Ellie Wegener, journalist and author, to guide writers along the way. The first gathering to meet and organize will be October 20, 2011 at 7:00pm in the fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome. All you need is the desire to write. Bring your laptop or a tablet and pen.

Questions: Call Ellie Wegener at: 703-790-1469
Call Kay Swift at: 202-337-9070