



Murder In New York

This morning I awoke to the dreadful news of a gunman murdering people in an upscale Manhattan, New York, neighborhood

But wait—this week on the Northside of Minneapolis, at least three people have been killed, and this year 10 out of the 13 murders in Minneapolis have

occurred on the Northside of our city. In our local media this receives about two days of attention and nothing nationally.

What gives? I understand that Minneapolis doesn't get the attention like New York City, but I think something sinister is growing in my awareness.

When one black or white murder happens in Uptown the light of media focus shines brightly, but murders on the Northside fade as rapidly as the dawn. Is this racism in our midst and in the core of our city and Minneapolis society? That's something to reflect upon.

I believe that God is calling us to action on the Northside of our city. We have more congregations there than any other denominations—eight to be exact. We have mission centers already established. This winter, through Making a World of Difference, in the epicenter of a troubled North side, Jordan New Life Lutheran Church is creating big strategic plans to counter the trends of violence and hopelessness there.

I believe that the health of our metropolitan area is dependant upon the holistic health of all of our neighborhoods. In our planning I believe that we will be receiving a clear call from God to mobilize our resources to work diligently in our city and particularly on the Northside. Together we can make a difference in people's lives.



Way of the Cross Planned for Veterans and Families

by Amy Blumenshine

A Good Friday Way of the Cross service will be held especially geared to the trials and sorrows of military service. Veterans and their families and those who support them from all denominations and congregations are invited to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 2315 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis on Good Friday afternoon, April 6. Please visit www.oursavioursmpls.org for time and updated information.

The service is being organized by the action group that was formed after the January ministerium regarding the reintegration of returning veterans.

The Way of the Cross will be lead by John Zemler, a wounded and disabled Gulf War veteran now teaching theology at Marquette University in Milwaukee. He credits "living the liturgy" with giving him the strength to continue living his life although he is in constant pain.

The *Via Dolorosa* (as the Way of the Cross is also known) is part of the church tradition of healing. It is the time in the church calendar when it is appropriate to recognize and lift up one's sufferings and laments, becoming one with the way of Jesus towards the cross.

So much of coping with the hardships of military service encourages "soldiering on" for both soldiers and family members. This is one opportunity to address the real hurts and losses of making war and suffering at home. In moving through the Good Friday journey, the worshiper joins with the suffering of Christians across the globe and eons.

We encourage church leaders to invite veterans and their families and attend this

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A Word from Bishop Johnson

In a conversation with Chaplain Neil Henry of the Veterans Hospital in Minneapolis, he offered some suggestions to pastors concerning pastoral care of our deployed military and their families.

His suggestions were:

- Regularly email soldiers.
- Personally visit families of veterans to assess their needs.
- Be tuned into financial difficulties and see where congregations may help when appropriate.
- Once a veteran returns, visit personally to build a level of trust. Phone calls or email will not be enough.

This great pastoral mission will be standing before us for years to come. It is my hope that this time our military personnel will be convinced that they are cared about.

Board of Pensions Offers “Road to Emmaus” During Easter

The ELCA Board of Pensions has developed “The Road to Emmaus,” a walking and wellness campaign for the 2007 Easter season (April 8 – May 26).

The road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-49) is the story of two disciples, who, unknowingly, share their journey with Christ, and experience all dimensions of well-being—physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and vocational: “Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (Luke 24:13-16).

During the seven weeks of Easter, Road to Emmaus participants are invited to walk and reflect on how the story relates to each dimension of their well-being, then select a dimension which they feel is in need of balance and create a goal to help them on their wellness journey.

A toolkit designed to be used over the course of seven weeks, to help accomplish this assessment is available at www.elcabop.org.



Safeguard Your Valuable Congregational Records Now

None of us likes to think about the permanent loss of records that tell our important congregational stories, but that can be, sadly, a reality due to fire, vandalism, natural disasters, or simple carelessness.

The ELCA Region 3 Archives (for the synods of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota) at Luther Seminary can help. They offer an affordable microfilming program for vital congregational records, as well as providing a wide range of advice on care, retention, and use of church records. A congregational archives manual is available at www.luthersem.edu/archives.

Paul Daniels, Region 3 archivist, will also provide help with any of these concerns; phone 651.641.3205 or email pdaniels@luthersem.edu.

Interim Pastors Plan National Events

The National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors is planning a series of education and training events for persons called to special service as interim ministers. Locally these events will be held at Luther Seminary.

A seminar on discernment for interim ministry, scheduled for September 13-14 will explore the question: “Do I have the experience, the leadership gifts, and the calling to do interim ministry?” A sequence of education events for those already involved in interim ministry will be held October 29 – November 2, 2007, and April 21-25, 2008. Continuing education (12 hour events) will be held December 4-7.

The annual conference of the association will be held May 24-26 at the Maritime Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, Maryland. For more information on any of these events, visit www.nalip.net.

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commemorative experience together. Participants should email ListenToVets@comcast.net for more information as well as giving planners a sense of how many will attend so the soup and setup can be planned accordingly.

In addition to a soup supper after the service, participants can choose to converse more with John Zemler and volunteer professional therapists from Walk-In Counseling Center.

Promoting the Good Friday Way of the Cross for veterans and their families is an opportunity to identify and connect with those carrying the wounds of war in their hearts in your congregation. Research shows that while many veterans come home with invisible wounds, those who are able to maintain their relationships (including their relationship with their faith community) have the best outcomes. The way can be rugged for both parties. Of course, soldiers and their families vary greatly in what they have experienced.

The Coming Home Collaborative Ministry with Veterans and Families is working on preparing a pastoral care network to embrace veterans and their families while they are in the “coming home” transition. We encourage churches to prepare for 11/11/07: Veteran’s Day in the churches as another opportunity for healing ourselves. We want to make sure that veterans and their families do not feel left behind and that they know that their church cares about their well-being. We are all in this together.

