

## ART & CAROL WAHLERS CENTER FOR APPLIED LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP

The NOW District is embedded in the *None Zone*, the least church-ed region of America. In fact, one in four residents, when asked about their religious affiliation, say they have “none.” As Lutheran Christians living in the Pacific Northwest we are convinced that God wants to move people from “The Land of None” to the land of grace – grace experienced in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is clear however that many of our traditional strategies and practices are no longer effective at reaching out to those around us or even in maintaining the existing membership rolls in our churches.

In this atmosphere, challenging questions confront us. For example: ‘What does it mean to be Lutheran in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the Pacific Northwest and what does that identity add to the Christian message?’ ‘How do we engage a culture that is increasingly ‘distrustful’ of the institutional church but increasingly interested in spiritual issues?’ Our culture is increasingly ‘young’ and multi-cultural in its worldview while the church tends to maintain its traditional single-culture views and practices. In this atmosphere, how might we address the ‘youth/young family drain’ from our pews?’ and ‘How do we reach those who don’t share our Lutheran roots?’

A partnership between the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Concordia University Portland, the Art & Carol Wahlers Center for Applied Lutheran Leadership

(CALL) has been developed to seek answers to such questions. It is our vision to provide programming, leadership, and partnerships to transform and nurture congregations into more vibrant, healthy communities focused on their unique ministry identities and purposes. *This is our Northwest District’s mission focus for the 2009-2012 triennium.*

Both a movement and a place, CALL will:

- Advance the shared mission of the NOW District and Concordia University ... that people come into a life-giving, life-transforming relationship with Jesus,
- Become ‘source central’ for leadership workshops, materials and speakers as congregations seek to identify and live out their unique ministry identity and purpose,
- Inspire and advance the ministry of the priesthood of believers,
- Provide opportunities for broad based Lutheran dialogue on strategic issues and,
- Provide clarity around ministry as Lutherans in the Pacific Northwest in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Relevant, meaningful, effective, and contributing to Christian witness in the region.

The Northwest District goal for the 2009 district Convention Mission Thankoffering is \$600,000 to help get CALL fully launched and operational. **\$1 Million Challenge Match DOUBLES Congregations Convention Thank offering!**

As you and your congregation pray and prepare to bring your congregational thankoffering to the District Convention, *know that your gift will be matched dollar for dollar*, thanks to the generosity of George and Jody Thurston, Bob and Virginia Hilken, Keren Brown Wilson and Michael DeShane, Janet Clifton, Grieg and Clarice Anderson, and others. Every dollar helps make the dream a reality. Ensure your thank offering gift has twice the impact by bringing your gift to the District Convention June 18-20.

God is on the move among us! We are a part of what He is doing!! *More info on conducting your campaign is at the CALL website: [www.cu-portland.edu/call](http://www.cu-portland.edu/call) or call Jim Pressnell at 503-493-6574.*

