

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION | 2009

Enterbeing Reaches The Hard-To-Reach

Portland, Oregon

Enterbeing is a storefront spiritual center and ministry of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Portland, Ore. It is reaching a completely untapped audience for just about any church in the United States: spiritual seekers turned off by “church.”



Enterbeing’s director, Scott Brazieal, says that people in his neighborhood don’t make a distinction between fundamentalists and other Christians. They relate to church only through what they see on TV—televangelists—and evangelical political activism that elects officials they don’t value.

People who are turned off by or are afraid of church will not show up for worship at Redeemer or any other church. **Which is exactly why Enterbeing exists. It’s a Lutheran ministry that meets people where they are and encourages a community of mutual respect and acceptance.** They test and explore unconditional love.

Every Wednesday night at Enterbeing, people gather to hear a participant tell their own experiential story. There are no sermons or sacraments. There’s no advising, no fixing, and no pat answers. Relationships begin in the one-on-one meetings and group reflections that follow these stories. A community develops and blossoms. And Redeemer suddenly doesn’t seem so bad, for a church.

Topics, such as forgiveness and financial debt, structure the storytelling. **Redeemer’s pastor, Terry Moe, does not preside, but participates, relating his struggles with family and faith.** Each night’s leader selects readings, which may or may not be from the Bible. The music is probably not from a Lutheran hymnal. Readings and music expand participants’ storytelling language.

Originally, Enterbeing was seen as a way to filter new members to Redeemer. But, according to Redeemer’s former council president, Rob Wentzien, **Enterbeing “is a place for people like myself [who grew up in the traditional church] to learn about how to be a church in the twenty-first century.”**

For more Stories of Faith in Action, visit www.elca.org/stories.
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.

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