

# STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

## An Awakened Sense of God's Grace

Lutherans in the town of Lexington, N.C., gathered in October 2008 to experience a renewed awareness of God's transforming presence in their lives.

Four local congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) worked in partnership to plan the event, appropriately called Grace Awakening.

The ELCA North Carolina Synod and ELCA churchwide staff provided financial support, training and leadership.

The Rev. John Mocko of Holly Grove Lutheran says that Grace Awakening was a goal of his congregation's Church Health Team in its first year of Natural Church Development.

"Grace Awakening was a time for the Lord to feed us, minister to people in personal ways and awaken us to God's grace which is a source of strength, faith and inspiration," says Pastor Mocko. "The fruit of Grace Awakening was a group of believers who were well fed, hungry for a deeper relationship with our Lord and open to the continuing work of renewal among us."

During the three-day event, attendees of all ages enjoyed a remarkable array of opportunities for spiritual renewal, plus good food, music and inspiring preaching.

Since Grace Awakening, the four ELCA congregations have continued to enjoy a spirit of shared ministry, celebrating the Reformation together with a special program for children and planning numerous joint confirmation events.

As for Holly Grove, Pastor Mocko says Grace Awakening continues to bear fruit. "We are now in our second cycle of Natural Church Development with another set of ministry- and life-transforming goals.

"Our members are energized and excited about what God is up to here in Lexington. Natural Church Development has been a tool that has helped us identify areas for growth, develop relevant goals and implement specific steps that nurture faith in our Risen Lord."



For more *Stories of Faith in Action*, visit [www.elca.org/stories](http://www.elca.org/stories). Do you have a story to share? E-mail us at [stories@elca.org](mailto:stories@elca.org).



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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