

INSIDE

From the Editor 2

From the Co-Chairs 3

From the Executive Director. . . . 4

RIC Pages. 5–6

Focus Groups Identify
Challenges, Opportunities 7

Churchwide Assembly 2011 . . . 10

2011 HRC Clergy Call 11

LC/NA Board Welcomes
New Members. 12

Ross Murray Moves to GLAAD 14

European Forum of LGBT
Christian Groups 15

Newsfronts 16

Our Logo

The Lutherans Concerned logo unifies visual symbols of our Christianity and our sexuality into a single image. It has two parts: the fish and the pink triangle. The IX-Thus, or fish symbol, originated as a secret recognition symbol for the early Christian community. The pink triangle was used by the Nazis to identify the European homosexuals who perished in the concentration camps of the Third Reich. Both symbols are now used by their respective communities as honored signs of recognition and support.

Statement of Sanctuary

The ministry of Lutherans Concerned, its meetings and its mailing lists are protected by our understanding of sanctuary. No participants need fear exposure or abuse in subscribing, joining or attending chapter functions.

All information that individuals may reveal of themselves is to be honored by others with total confidentiality. Mutual trust and respect, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, is offered to all who may elsewhere experience alienation, distrust or rejection. For the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we welcome you.

Diversity and Anti-Racism

An equal-opportunity employer, LC/NA welcomes candidates for paid or volunteer positions who share our commitments to full participation for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and anti-racist accountability to communities of color.



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Challenging national convention set for church in Canada

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) meets in biennial national convention in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, July 14–17. The issues that will be taken up in the course of this convention are far-reaching in their impact, challenging in their importance, and potentially contentious and divisive because of strongly-held opinions and/or differences in interpretation of Scripture.

Social Statement on Human Sexuality

The ELCIC Human Sexuality Task Force delivered its report to the National Church Council (NCC), which considered it in April 2011. The report, “Proposed ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality,” and the document that outlines the vision and process used to prepare it, “The Public Witness of the Evangelical Lutheran

Above: worship during the 2009 ELCIC National Convention.



Church in Canada: A Policy on How the Church Addresses Social Issues,” are both available on the denomination’s website, www.elcic.ca.

The NCC adopted a motion recommending that the national convention approve and adopt the proposed social statement.

The proposed social statement has three sections, as stated in an NCC open letter to the Church (<http://www.elcic.ca/Documents/NCCLettertotheChurch-April32011.pdf>): “Encountering the World in Which We Live” names, without judgment, some of the current

continued on page 8

The Editor

DALE TRUSCOTT



Choosing Stagnation

“I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. . . Listen, I am standing at the door and knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”

—REVELATION 3:16ff NRSV

“What difference do you want to make?” That is one of the concluding comments in Emily Eastwood’s article in this issue

of *Concord*. Since I see my role as editorial writer as pushing the envelope a bit beyond the “official” statements of our leadership, I want to ask that question as well.

Sometimes I have asked the question somewhat rhetorically, “Has it been worth 40 years of struggle to win the affirmation of the church, the ELCA or ELCIC, only to find that church stagnating and shrinking?” Yes,

church that the government is doing these days, cheered on by the media who revel in juicy controversy because it will sell more Pop Tarts or whatever is sponsoring the segment. We seem to concentrate on issues that, although not unimportant, are peripheral or only tangent to the main point. Evangelicals criticize the “mainline” Protestants for obsessing about social proprieties and progressive

The love of God in Jesus is really what our mission is all about.

we should go to Orlando in August. I’m already here, so that isn’t much of a task for me. And what will we find when we get there? Motions to shrink the Churchwide expression of the ELCA even further. Reports on synodical motions to shrink and merge. The synod of which I was a member until a couple of years ago, Southeast Michigan, has called an excellent new bishop, but, at the same time, has entered negotiations about merger with the North West Lower Michigan Synod.

Not only this, but I reflect that we do the same in the

movements supposedly “to the exclusion of the Gospel,” while they themselves obsess in the opposite direction, trying to legislate Levitical false moralities and cheering those who itch to “lock and load.”

I think the Jesus of Revelation would call this being neither hot nor cold. It is a lukewarm church that coddles its constituencies while missing the opportunities before it to spread the love and forgiveness of Jesus of Nazareth and of God for a troubled world. It is a lukewarm government that refuses to negotiate about critical issues of fiscal policy,

budgeting, and almost everything else, while our 401(k)s shrink as the economy languishes. I noted this morning after the umpteenth CNN report on Anthony Weiner’s inappropriate internet usage that they were reading Tweets and Facebook posts begging the media to move on to more important issues, even as that same media continued to obsess about the issue. Selling more Pop Tarts again, I guess.

So, I rejoice that Emily ends her article pointing out that the love of God in Jesus is really what our mission is all about.

I belong to a congregation in Orlando that has tremendous opportunity for growth and ministry in a new section of Orlando. Visitors come through the doors every week at every service. Yet, the congregation wants to obsess on “what we have always done before,” our traditions and financial security. I attend a small Episcopal congregation that is the only progressive Episcopal parish in a right-wing diocese. A new, and reportedly progressive, rector will have started her ministry there when you read this. And, yet, the congregation is so old in member age that funerals happen every month and baptisms once every several years. I have not seen a new member reception in over two years there. But they love their traditions. Perhaps we all will love our traditions all the way to the cemetery. I once told an old couple at a church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, that their congregation did have the option of living off the \$1 million endowment until it was gone. It would probably last about as long as their generation would last. Then they could carve R. I. P. on the back of the granite church sign and turn that side toward the street.

We are not privy to knowing whether the Revelation Jesus will decide to spit us out of his mouth as a church, as a nation,

continued on page 3

Publication Information

CONCORD is published quarterly by Lutherans Concerned/North America www.lcna.org. Subscriptions are included with membership or are available separately: \$25 a year to non-members. First class or foreign postage is extra. Write if you have special mailing requirements. Requests for past issues, along with payment of \$5 per issue, should be sent to CONCORD Copies, PO Box 4707, Saint Paul, MN 55104-0707.

Submissions should be directed to: CONCORD Editor, PO Box 4707, Saint Paul, MN 55104-0707 or via e-mail to: concord@lcna.org. Appearance of names of individuals in this newsletter, or membership in Lutherans Concerned/North America does not constitute a definition of sexual orientation. The membership list of LC/NA and the subscription list to CONCORD are strictly confidential. Send changes of address to address above.

LC/NA Staff

Executive Director: Emily Eastwood
exec@lcna.org
Operations Manager: Brett Bowman
operations@lcna.org
Office Administrator/Legislative Assistant:
Tim Fisher admin@lcna.org
Data Entry/Clerical Assistant: Lissa Messner
lissam@lcna.org
LVC Intern: Emily Hamilton emilyh@lcna.org

LC/NA Board of Directors

Co-Chair: Nicole García nicole@lcna.org
Co-Chair: Rev. Chris Berry chris@lcna.org
Vice Chair: Jeannine Janson vicechair@lcna.org
Secretary: Kurt Neumann secretary@lcna.org
Interim Treasurer: Phil Soucy
treasurer@lcna.org
Director of Communications: Phil Soucy
communications@lcna.org
Co-Directors of Committee Working at the Intersection of Oppressions:
Judy Griffin intersections@lcna.org.
Darryl Kiehl intersections@lcna.org.
Director of International Programs:
Philip Moeller international@lcna.org
Canada Representative: Everett Freeman
canada@lcna.org
Bisexual Representative: Olivia-Beth Horak
bi@lcna.org
Transgender Representative: JamieAnn Meyers
trans@lcna.org

Editorial

Editorial Director: Pr. Dale Truscott
concord@lcna.org
Associate Editor: Carol Dunn
concordRIC@lcna.org
Design: Jim Gerhard

Printed on recycled paper

ISSN 0741-9872

Co-Chairs



NICOLE GARCÍA

REV. CHRIS BERRY



From Nicole García...

During this biennium, the board has been blessed to be able to work with a grant provided to LC/NA by the Haas Jr. Foundation focusing on leadership development. Beth Zemsky, a top consultant on board dynamics and a leadership coach, has been working with the LC/NA board since October. At the April board meeting, Beth led the board through several exercises and conversations about different types of board governance and leadership styles.

We will continue working to strengthen the board's processes and systems. Some of the areas of focus will be on board policy development, board fundraising/

These are very **exciting and busy times** for the board of directors.

development involvement, strengthening the Board Leadership Development Committee (formerly known as the Nominating Committee), and the development of our first Personnel Committee focusing on the board's role of supervising the executive director of the organization.

In July, several board members, regional coordinators, and staff will meet in Minneapolis for a weekend of strategic planning.

These are very exciting and busy times for the board of directors. We welcome new members to the board: Rev. Christopher Berry, Jeannine Janson, Kurt Neumann, Phil Soucy, and JamieAnn Meyers. See the article on page 12 of this issue of the *Concord* for details.

Every morning, I take out Luther's Small Catechism as part of my prayers. On a recent morning, my little copy of the catechism opened to where Luther writes, "Jesus Christ... has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human being. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him.... This is most certainly true."

In those words, I am reminded why I do this work. I don't volunteer at LC/NA for the glory or position. I do this because I was welcomed into a

church when I had felt worthless and afraid. My faith was restored by people who told me, a transgender Latina, that I was welcomed at God's table—that I was saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

From Christopher Berry...

Indeed, these are exciting times to be working with Lutherans Concerned. The context in both the church and in the public realm is rapidly changing. Particularly, we are thrilled that the Presbyterian Church (USA), a full-communion partner of the ELCA, recently passed policy changes allowing for partnered LGBT ministers to serve on the roster. And as of this writing, New York State is poised to vote on a historic bill that, if passed, would provide for marriage of same-gender couples in that state. Opportunities abound for the mission of LC/NA to continue bearing fruit.

I am eager to take part in the strategic planning meeting in July. Solid strategic planning will help the organization carry out its mission within a rapidly changing landscape as effectively as possible, articulating specific goals and describing action steps and resources needed to accomplish them.

I am delighted with the results of the synod assemblies held this spring. By the time you read this issue of the *Concord*, all sixty-five synods will have met. Thirty-nine synods will have considered Goodsoil's anti-bullying legislation, and thirty-nine will have voted to adopt it—with nearly unanimous support in almost every case. The voice of the church speaking out against bullying, harassment, and related violence—while addressing the intersection of race, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, body shape, and physical ability—has provided a powerful witness to the healing and life-affirming promise of the Gospel. LC/NA and Goodsoil is working to make it better. Thanks be to God! ▼

From the Editor

continued from page 2

as a group, or as individuals. But we can decide whether we are lukewarm or not. Lutherans Concerned has never been lukewarm; I've been around for half of its lifetime, so I can say that. But I can't say that for sure about the church expressions to which we relate. One of the messages that I would send to the ELCA in Orlando or to the ELCIC in Saskatoon is, "Let us get on with the gospel. Let us spread the word about the love of Jesus and the forgiveness, restoration, affirmation, support and concern this love brings to people."

I am as tired as the rest of us that our task is never over. But, we know it will never be over. Jesus' task is never over. But, we are buoyed up by the way our churches can rise to the issues and occasions. We are encouraged by the stories that we try to share here and elsewhere. We are motivated by our common bonds. We do not choose stagnation. We choose the love of God! ▼

Executive Director



EMILY EASTWOOD

We were ushered rather quickly through a tunnel, elevators, and a series of hallways into a reception area next to the Senate chambers in the U.S. Capitol. Sturdy, very serious, Secret Service men in nice suits with wires snaking up their necks and into their ears stood guard at the entry to the room and near the massive oak conference table which would serve as the meeting place. We waited, standing, both honored and in honor, hushed, in the shadows of flags, dark woods, the brightness of the

In such a time of opportunity and challenge when nothing is standing still, what difference do you want to make?

day dwarfed by the reverence of the moment. I wondered at the arc of history from independence in revolution to democracy towards justice and to injustice and back again with the cycles of government.

He was shorter than I expected, just slightly taller than I, this U.S. Senator with a reputation for raw boldness, humor, and a fierce allegiance to the LGBT community. He was late and apologized for that, Netanyahu was in town. Though he wasn't Lutheran, this guy knew how to sin boldly and believe more boldly still. Our delegation of pastors and allies sat with him for a few meaningful minutes. There was no fluff. We thanked him for his prophetic support. We talked about anti-bullying, ENDA, the Respect of Marriage Act (pro-marriage for same-gender couples), and, his bill, the Student Non-Discrimination Act. Of all the legislation coming forward the only piece which had some bi-partisan

support was the Safe Schools Improvement Act. Like our anti-bullying memorial, SSIA is focused at the intersection of oppressions on bullying and includes sexual orientation and gender identity. He was happy that SSIA was moving slowly ahead, but quite dismayed that his bill which would protect LGBT students and legislate non-discrimination by policy, was stalled. Stacked along party lines, opponents of his bill would not

even attend a hearing. I asked this Senator what we could do for him. With a quick frankness, he leaned over the table towards us and said firmly, "Find me a Republican!" There was a moment of knowing laughter and then sadness. We can find him lots of Republicans, some of them staunch members of LC/NA, because anti-gay bias does not necessarily fall along party lines for everyone. Sadly at this time in history, we would be hard pressed to find a Senator ready to cross party lines to support basic non-discrimination for LGBT youth and young adults.

Nothing is standing still in church or society. Victories, like the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, held, intact, for what seemed like only a moment, before being attacked in an attempt to preempt implementation. The Presbyterians finally ratified the elimination of policies precluding ordination of gays and lesbians. Forty Methodist pastors have committed to ecclesial disobedience, publicly saying they would perform same-gender weddings, an action plainly against church policy. Illinois has enacted a law providing for civil unions for same-gender couples. In response, an Illinois bishop in the ELCA has issued a statement attempting to restrict the use of the word marriage to the union of a man and a woman, erroneously citing the sexuality social statement as rationale. Similarly, an Iowa bishop has posted a video to the synod's website advising pastors and congregations not to perform same-gender weddings in that state where such marriages are legal. These actions by ELCA bishops in progressive areas fly in the face of a strict reading of the social statement which describes same-gender marriage as part of the ELCA context and leaves discernment on such issues to pastors and congregations. On the flip side the New England Synod Council has moved forward with a resolution eliminating that synod's ban on the use of the word marriage for same-gender couples. And last, but certainly not least, the house and senate in Minnesota, a state where there are over 800,000 Lutherans, has put a constitutional amendment precluding same-gender marriage on the ballot for November 2012.

The overall trend line may be bending our direction, but the rather spectacular downturns and detours along the way occasionally leave me breathless, if undaunted. We spend a lot of time being really angry at individuals or groups who seem determined to stall or reverse progress. I learned a long time ago from our Director of Communications, Phil Soucy, that it is more productive, both for our own spirits and for the movement, to focus on what's wrong instead of who's wrong. I don't always measure up to that standard personally, but as an organization our strategy has been to lean into the issues rather than to demonize perceived enemies. Each set-back is at once a challenge and an opportunity. Each victory must be seen in exactly the same way.

continued on page 5

RIC Settings

Added to the Roster since last issue

- Incarnation Lutheran Church, Bridgehampton, New York
- Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Lakeridge Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington
- Messiah Lutheran Church, Rochester, New York
- Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church, Detroit, Michigan
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester, Massachusetts
- Unity Lutheran Church, Bel-Nor, Missouri

For the complete list of RIC congregations, synods, and organizations, go to our website at www.lcna.org

Tattoos and Reconciling in California: RIC Report from Region 2

In March, Lutherans Concerned/Los Angeles hosted a very successful Building an Inclusive Church (RIC) Training with Ross Murray. Twenty-one people from six Los Angeles area congregations laughed, learned, and recommitted themselves to the Welcoming Movement. Three of these congregations are now in process of becoming RIC. The other congregations are already RIC but wanted to re-energize their ministry to the LGBT community. The event was a wonderful reminder of the

excitement and renewal possible in RIC ministries. We were able to encourage a “cloud of witnesses” to work together celebrating God’s transforming grace.

Lutherans Concerned/Los Angeles continues to be a vital presence at Pride Events. The RIC rainbow heart tattoo has caught a lot of attention at both Los Angeles and Long Beach Pride events. This innovative evangelism tool allows clergy and volunteers a full minute (during application of the tattoo!) to tell visitors about RIC congregations and the Welcoming movement in the ELCA. We give everyone a club card with information

about the eighteen RIC congregations in the area. It is incredible to have Pride participants run to the booth asking for “one of those cool tattoos!” Between the two Pride events, it is our intention to apply 5000 tattoos in an effort to share God’s inclusive love and grace through Christ and our Lutheran welcome to all.

These are exciting days of ministry and growing our church with and for LGBT saints of God.

—Kenny Callaghan, RIC Co-Coordinator for Region 2

Executive Director

continued from page 4

Ours is a movement for full participation, not merely a series of individual campaigns. Every RIC training, each anti-bullying memorial passed, synod assembly table, Churchwide Assembly worship service, Sunday forum on welcoming is critical to our movement. Whether standing at a press conference, talking with a Senator, speaking to the European Forum, having coffee with a donor, or addressing an adult Sunday School, I know that our actions are only part of a larger wave that is both ecumenical and global.

If you asked me what you could do for LC/NA, I would not answer, “Find me a bishop,” though some days we could really use a few more bishops who are not afraid to be prophetic in the face of a legion of fearful colleagues. I could say, it’s time to get

a ticket to Orlando for the Churchwide Assembly where a memorial passed in 2010 seeking to ban “formally recognizing, officiating, [or] conducting any ceremony which contradicts an understanding of marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman” will likely come to the floor. I could say, send money, and a lot of it. I could say, write your senator and congressional representative. All these would be fine and helpful to be sure. But what I probably would say is this, “In such a time of opportunity and challenge when nothing is standing still, when what’s wrong is the fear of a church which could choose stagnation over relevance in the 21st century, when some in our church and our country are more interested in market share than justice, what difference do you want to make?”

Our movement for full participation progresses one conversation, one relationship, one heart, and one mind at a time. We don’t need a stately room, or secret

service. We are hushed by the presence of the Holy One who leaves us both breathless and inspired. We serve with honor and in honor of those who have gone before us and those children who will come after. Whether having a conversation over coffee hour with a troubled parent, deepening and expanding the RIC program, working to change policy to practice, or taking our Lutheran voices to a society that needs what we have, we are changing the church and the world. Neither senators, nor bishops, nations nor denominations, neither bullies nor anti-marriage amendments can keep us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This I believe. ▼

LC/NA hires Rev. Luke Smetters to head up CWA, Reconciling Works planning

With the departure of Deputy Director Ross Murray to GLAAD, LC/NA has hired Rev. Luke S. Smetters to manage event-planning for the Goodsoil presence at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando and LC/NA’s biennial assembly, *Reconciling Works*, in Washington, D.C., in July 2012. He will handle all aspects of preparing for these assemblies, including event-site logistics, catering, volunteer coordination, and coordinating planning for the festival worship services.



Luke comes to us with solid credentials and is eminently suited for the job. He is an ordained ELCA pastor serving Wiota Lutheran Church in Wiota, Wisconsin. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Valparaiso University in 2004 and a Masters of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC) in 2009.

Luke completed a one-year internship with the Lutheran World Federation in 2006 after serving the worship desk. He was contracted by the ELCA Churchwide Office to assist in the event-planning logistics for the 2005, 2007, and 2009 Churchwide Assemblies. At LC/NA’s July 2010 assembly, *Let Justice Roll*, Luke helped plan and coordinate many of the logistics.

He is very passionate about worship and ecclesiology. His congregation in Wiota greatly appreciates his energy, creativity, attention to detail, and his playfully optimistic spirit. LC/NA is excited to work again with Luke during the next several months.

Upcoming Trainings on Building an Inclusive Church

October 1, 2011
Chicago, Illinois
United in Faith Lutheran

October 6–8, 2011
Henderson, North Carolina
First Congregational Church

October 14–16, 2011
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania
St. Andrew’s Lutheran

See www.welcomingresources.org/communityorg.htm for more information on upcoming trainings. If you would like to host a training in your area, please contact Emily Hamilton at 651-665-0861 or emilyh@lcna.org.

St. Stephen, Marlborough, Massachusetts, Becomes RIC

By **Carol M. Dunn**

A pastor's service book on the altar? Communion elements? Of course. But an orange? This year, St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Marlborough, Massachusetts displayed an orange on the Lord's Table throughout the Easter season to symbolize their hope that all people—especially LGBT persons—will be included in the Church's fellowship everywhere. This display was inspired by Rabbi Susannah Heschel who, in the 1980s, began a tradition of putting an orange on her Passover Seder plate to represent the future fruitfulness of Judaism when LGBT Jews were truly welcome in the community. Beginning Maundy Thursday, St. Stephen placed an orange on the Lord's

*While **we know we are welcoming**, many people in the wider community don't know it.*

Table in the hope that one day every congregation that calls itself Christian will welcome all people of every race, ethnicity, economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, body shape, and ability.

A congregation of some 200 members located not much more than 20 miles west of Boston, St. Stephen is relatively new to the RIC program. Under the heading, "Radical Hospitality," St. Stephen begins its self-identification saying, "St. Stephen Lutheran is a community of Jesus people who believe that our hands and feet are called upon to do God's work in our world, our communities, and our neighborhoods."

Before its recent self-study, most members believed they were already welcoming, and some felt the discussion was quite unnecessary. But, as the congregation website states, "We soon realized that, while we know we are welcoming, many people in the wider community, especially those whose identities have often put them at the margins of faith communities and society, don't know it." And so began a deliberate

effort to consider being intentionally welcoming, making their welcome known to those who have been silenced or made to feel unwanted by their society or by the churches.

The beginnings of the study came two years ago, during the 2009 New England Synod Assembly, just a few months before the momentous churchwide assembly decisions. Pastor Scott Howard and voting member Stacie LaBossiere talked about RIC. They had seen displays by the synod's Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Understanding and agreed it was important that all people feel welcomed.

Their plan was supported by three strong legs: an RIC synod with an active synodical task force, a congregation with a strong sense of community and openness, and a pastor who took pleasure in being a leader in such a congregation. And so Pastor Howard suggested an RIC committee be formed to study and present the RIC program to the congregation.

LaBossiere was ideal to lead the committee, since she and her husband had told Pastor Howard when they joined St. Stephen that they would only participate in a welcoming congregation—one which would welcome, for example, her lesbian sister. She was reassured that St. Stephen was a community of open minds and open hearts. That conviction and passion—of congregation, pastor and LaBossiere—provided a solid emotional and spiritual foundation for the study.

Members spent many hours learning, praying, discerning, teaching, and preparing to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation. They used LC/NA materials, though they did not take formal training. Justice and hospitality were key antidotal responses to the irrational fear that can control people. The congregation came to recognize that "even a general statement of welcome can often be heard as really meaning 'everybody but me.'" The vote to become RIC was unanimous.

The discussions and vote were not undertaken to increase congregational numbers, but there was an unstated thought that, as Pastor Howard phrased it, perhaps the RIC welcome would have an "attractional" effect (i.e. "if we build it, they will come"). At that time, the congregation had no out LGBT members, though there were families with LGBT relatives. Local newspapers reacted with interest when the vote to become RIC was so successful, and now members work vigorously to spread the word.

Both the evangelism and outreach committees have been reorganized to include an intentional awareness of the marginalized, serving the community from the local MetroWest region on to synod and worldwide relief efforts. The congregation cares for needy families and military on deployment, and takes an active interest in medical research.

The congregation works to include all excluded or minority groups. Their RIC identity has helped them grow in the Gospel. The orange on the altar is simply a representation of their commitment to full inclusion in all aspects of the life of the church. ■



Focus Groups Identify Challenges, Opportunities

By Jane Austin

These are exciting and challenging times for the LC/NA community as we prepare for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Orlando and the ELCIC National Convention in Saskatoon and continue building a more welcoming church. We're seeing tremendous energy and hunger for justice and reconciliation among our LC/NA members and supporters, and a strong vision for our work ahead. The power of our shared passion—combined with our generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure—will continue to usher in this new era for the ELCA.

This energy and engagement was readily apparent in three focus groups that I convened on behalf of LC/NA last fall at the Believe Out Loud Power Summit in Orlando, which was attended by over 90 Lutheran LGBTQ people and allies from around the country. The focus groups were designed to gather feedback about LC/NA and identify the specific resources our community needs to move policy change into practice. Comprised of active LC/NA members and supporters—including clergy, lay people, and young adults—focus group participants voiced their strong belief that LC/NA is a prophetic, vital, and dynamic organization with a rich history and a critical role to play in transforming the church

*The power of our **shared passion**, combined with our **generous gifts** of time, talent, and treasure, will continue to usher in this new era for the ELCA.*

we love. Participants also expressed their concern about the tremendous work that lies before us, including an urgent need to increase LC/NA's visibility and outreach, grow support and leadership opportunities for young people, and provide new resources to help implement policy change and better care for LGBTQ people and families.

The most powerful focus group theme to emerge is that LC/NA provides a family of support and spiritual nurture that helps LGBTQ people and allies break through their isolation and find courage and support. With great emotion, one participant described her first encounter with LC/NA at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. "This was my first time at Churchwide, and when I arrived at the Goodsoil room I burst out crying," she said. "I'm from a rural area and had no idea others shared my passion on this issue. I didn't know LC/NA existed. I suddenly

felt I had a purpose there—I volunteered all week, and have been actively engaged ever since." Focus group participants said that LC/NA's community of like-minded, welcoming people helped them reintegrate their spiritual and personal lives. "LC/NA provides a community within my denomination with people who understand my religious culture, my theology, the hymns I sing, all those kinds of things," said one participant. "It helps bring all the pieces of my life together." Participants also stressed that despite policy change, there is still a great need for sanctuary and support.

A second key theme from the groups is that LC/NA provides invaluable resources and leadership training that empowers people to get engaged and make change in the church. One woman described how her fear of introducing a resolution at her local synod assembly turned to amazement. "LC/NA sent me everything I needed—arguments, wording for the resolution, other support—they walked me through all of this long-distance. On the day of the assembly all these people appeared and told powerful stories at the microphone. I couldn't believe it! I couldn't have done any of this without LC/NA."

Focus group participants also called on LC/NA to claim its role as a prophetic voice and leader in moving policy to practice and tackling the work before us. The strongest challenge they identified is increasing LC/NA visibility—particularly in rural and less-Lutheran areas, and among young people—in order to expand the organization's reach and provide greatly-needed resources and support. Participants also expressed great urgency in meeting the needs of young LGBTQ people, particularly in light of recent youth suicides, to provide the support they need to thrive and become leaders in the church. "Getting youth to LC/NA events is lifesaving," said one participant. "If just one of these youth who killed themselves recently had been at last summer's Let Justice Roll conference, that young person would probably be alive today." Young adult participants called for greater opportunities for youth leadership and a stronger voice in the organization. "I'd like to see more young RCs and youth representatives on the board," said one participant. "The future of this organization depends on us being relevant to the younger generation, which has very different needs and concerns."

Across the board, focus groups called for expanding the RIC program, growing the number of LC/NA trainings, creating new sexuality curriculum and family care resources, ensuring that seminaries and candidacy processes are safer, expanding Web offerings, and many other activities. "After the 2009 vote we now have a tremendous opportunity," said one clergy participant. "LC/NC doesn't need to go it alone anymore and be out there plowing its own path. We have a stronger stance after the social statement to say, 'Now we can do this—now we can do what LC/NA wants,' and work with the ELCA to

continued on page 9

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

continued from page 1



issues of sexuality that face our world; “Facing God and Being Church” seeks to find common language to articulate the faith and theology which guide our life together; and “Doing Ministry” seeks to stimulate conversation about mission and ministry at the local and global level.

The proposed social statement speaks of families having various definitions: couples (heterosexual or homosexual), with or without children, extended families of aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, step-parents, stepchildren, families of unrelated people such as friends or people living in religious communities. It says family is a “fundamental building block of society,” and “a core factor in the formation of personal identity.”

As to marriage, the proposed social statement says that, “traditionally, marriage has meant a commitment of one man and one woman. The church now faces the reality that same-sex couples can be legally married in Canada and in some other countries. Marriage provides community support, including legal protections for spouses and children; this support and protection are a need for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Our church is conflicted on how to acknowledge covenants of fidelity made by same-sex couples. While acknowledging same-sex couples is troubling to some members of this church, failure to acknowledge these covenants of fidelity is troubling

to others. At this moment in time, this church is being called in the spirit of St. Paul (Galatians 2) to respect and to allow space for varied understanding and practices.”

The proposed social statement says that the church is called upon “to denounce discrimination, including sexual discrimination, in all its forms.” The document says the church knows it is affected “by the biases of our predominantly heterosexual culture, and by our society’s call for more openness.”

The NCC asked the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee of the ELCIC to review the proposed social statement and to prepare motions appropriate to the statement. Those motions on the unity of the church, presiding at or blessing a marriage, and standards for ordination and consecration can be found in an adjacent box. The NCC approved those motions and recommended them for adoption by the national convention.

There is no doubt that the national convention will be one of prayerful consideration, vigorous and determined debate, and long-lasting importance to the life of the ELCIC, Lutherans and Christians everywhere, and LGBT people in Canada and elsewhere.

You are encouraged to read the documents yourself. Whatever your opinion, all of us are invited to offer prayers lifting up the delegates who gather to consider this all-important document and asking that the Holy Spirit guide the delegates to understand that Christ’s church is a fully inclusive church.

The National Church Council of the ELCIC approved and recommended for adoption to the 2011 National Convention the following three motions:

1. Motion on the Unity of the Church

MOVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following affirmation as representing the position of this church and communicate this action to congregations, partner churches in Canada, sister churches in the Lutheran World Federation and other Lutheran church associations in Canada.

An Affirmation Concerning the Unity of the Church

As a confessional Lutheran Church which bases its life and teaching on the Scriptures, the Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada affirms with the confessors at Augsburg in 1530 that “it is enough for the unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments” (AC VII).

We affirm that the church ought not be divided because of disagreement over moral issues, no matter how distressing such disagreement might be. We believe that any attempt to divide the church because of disagreements over morals, polity or liturgy is an unacceptable confusion of Law and Gospel, which will lead inevitably to a distortion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

We encourage ELCIC members, congregations and synods and churches who share our commitment to the

scriptures, creeds and confessions and who disagree with one another over issues of morals, polity (including standards for ordination or consecration) and/or liturgy to remain in dialogue and unity with one another and maintain unity in the gospel and the sacraments as St Paul recommends in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. We encourage all Lutherans to work for and nurture the unity of the confessional witness to the Gospel which is essential to the Lutheran tradition. We ask those persons, congregations, synods and/or churches who are in disagreement to refrain from actions that will divide the body of Christ.

2. Motion on Presiding at or Blessing Marriages

MOVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following policy statement:

It is the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that rostered ministers may, according to the dictates of their consciences as informed by the Gospel, the Scriptures, the Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, preside at or bless legal marriages according to the laws of the province within which they serve. All rostered ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are encouraged to exercise due diligence in

preparing couples for marriage. All rostered ministers serving congregations are encouraged at all times to conduct their ministry in consultation with the lay leaders in the congregation and with sensitivity to the culture within which the congregation serves.

3. Motion on Standards for Ordination and Consecration

MOVED that convention actions NC-1993-16 and NC-1989-96 be rescinded and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following policy:

It is the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that sexual orientation is not in itself a factor which disqualifies a candidate for rostered ministry or a rostered minister seeking a call. Candidates and rostered ministers are in all cases expected to adhere to the qualifications and standards as set out in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and of the synod within which they serve. Synods and congregations are expected to evaluate candidates for ordination or consecration and rostered ministers for call in accordance with a conscience informed by the Gospel, the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Structure of the Church

Two years ago, a task force was formed to review the structure of the church and make recommendations to the national convention. The report of the ELCIC Structural Renewal Task Force is available, with an accompanying Frequently Asked Questions document, at <http://elcic.ca/Structural-Renewal/default.cfm>. In this report, the Task Force, searching for a framework that is flexible, affordable and sustainable, recommends that the national Lutheran church be re-structured into three synods from its current five, that existing conferences be reconfigured into 'areas' (also known as groupings of congregations) and supported by leadership teams, that conventions of the National Church be smaller in size, and that both National and Synod Conventions be held triennially instead of the current biennial schedule.

In April 2011, the National Church Council (NCC) received the report and recommendations. The NCC adopted a motion to the National Convention that it approve the recommendations in principle and authorize the NCC to move forward into an implementation phase. Sheila Hamilton, chair of the task force, has said that the delegates to this national convention are only being asked to approve the recommendations in principle and that no structural changes will result from this vote. She said that implementation teams will be formed at the synod and national church levels to look at the details of implementation. These details will then be brought to the 2012 synod conventions and the 2013 national convention for approval before any actual restructuring would begin.

Elections

Elections will be held at the National Convention of the ELCIC in Saskatoon, SK, July 14-17, 2011 for National Bishop, National Secretary and National Treasurer, each of the current incumbents, Rev. Susan Johnson, Don Storch, and Ken Hartviksen respectively, being eligible for re-election. However, Storch and Hartviksen have chosen not to stand again. Additionally, elections will be held for 8 of the 16 clergy and lay positions on the ELCIC National Church Council, 3 of 10 clergy and lay positions on the Board of Directors of ELCIC Group Services, Inc. and 4 of 7 clergy and lay positions on the ELCIC Court of Adjudication.

Lutherans Concerned in Canada (LCIC) will have a presence at the national convention, as will the allies in favor of full inclusion. LC/NA Executive Director Emily Eastwood and Communications Director Phil Soucy will be present to assist in any way LCIC and other Canadian organizers wish. As in the past, LCIC's plans include a reception for the delegates, one of the opportunities to build relationships with delegates as well as to advance the positions of LCIC regarding full participation.

Prayers are invited starting now and throughout the period leading up to and during the national



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Voting during the 2009 ELCIC National Convention.

convention for the important work that has to be done, for the passage of the Social Statement, for the work of right-sizing the structure of the ELCIC for its future work in mission for others—spreading the Gospel—and the election of leaders for the ELCIC

Lutherans Concerned in Canada will have a **presence** at the national convention.

who are led by the Holy Spirit to envision and work for a church as Christ would have it—fully inclusive and showing forth the Gospel message through action and word to God's glory. ▼

Focus Groups

continued from page 7

carry this to fruition.”

Many are calling this a *kairos* time in the ELCA, with exciting opportunities for growth and transformation, and much work before us. I believe our shared success in this transformation depends on our continued partnership, our financial generosity, and our prayerful support. Our future rests on our ability to engage and grow our community and harness our mutual passion to move policy into practice and fulfill LC/NA's mission of “co-creating a world without outcasts, where all are called to serve as guests and hosts at God's table of blessing and power.” ▼

Jane Austin is Marketing Communications Director at AchieveMpls, a nonprofit partner of the Minneapolis Public Schools. She is formerly the LC/NA Vice-Chair for Development.

Come to Orlando for ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2011

From the 28th floor of the Marriott in Orlando, Florida, one commands a remarkable vista. Without hills or trees or other tall buildings nearby, one can see that Orlando is a land of, well,

lands. There is Gatorland and Legoland and the Holyland Experience. There is Sea World and the World of Harry Potter and, of course, Disney World. There are Islands within Kingdoms, there is Magic, and Gardens, and there is something called Universal, whose name seems to want to annex them all.

The Marriott is a World Center, indeed, and it is where the ELCA will hold its 2011 Churchwide Assembly (CWA-2011) this summer. From August 15–19, the Marriott World Center will be transformed into a veritable Lutheranland, the center of which—you guessed it—will be Goodsoil Central. Goodsoil Central will be the hub of our hospitality and activity at CWA-2011.

A highlight of the assembly will be the Goodsoil Festival Worship, which will be held at the Marriott. There will be wonderful preaching, music, and liturgy, all focused on justice and reconciliation rooted in the

Goodsoil encourages you to **consider attending** the assembly in Orlando.

Gospel for all people. Our preacher will be the Rev. Dr. Shauna Hannan, who teaches homiletics at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The presiding minister will be Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod. All voting members, visitors, and Goodsoil volunteers are invited to attend.

This year, voting members at the Assembly will consider Goodsoil's anti-bullying memorial. As of this writing, the memorial has already been adopted

by thirty three synods and will come to the floor of the churchwide assembly. We believe the memorial will help broaden the discussion of anti-bullying beyond sexual orientation and gender identity to include other issues of "difference," such as race, economic status, body shape, age, and ability. It will also work to broaden the scope of anti-bullying work throughout the country so that anti-bullying is not seen as resting entirely on the shoulders of the public school system. Schools have often been unable, and sometimes unwilling, to adequately address the needs of some students, in particular the needs of those whom this legislation identifies as "higher risk populations," who could be gay or lesbian kids, African-American kids, economically disadvantaged kids, etc.

To support our anti-bullying memorial, Goodsoil will work with voting members to prepare for the floor discussion. Our first activity, held on the first day of the assembly, will be to hold a hearing, open to all assembly-goers (visitors and voters alike), where participants will hear from experts in the field of anti-bullying, personal stories of those who have experienced such harassment, and insights from theologians.

We know that the progress made toward more fully including LGBT people and their families will be challenged at this assembly. Memorials to recall or revise the sexuality social statement and to rescind the ministry policy changes will come to floor in one form or another. Supporters of the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities will be called to preserve the current policies. Because many voting members will be serving for the first time, the need for Goodsoil participants to gracefully engage with voting members is as crucial as ever.

Other important issues for assembly consideration will be a major social statement on genetics, called *Genetics, Faith, and Responsibility*, and a proposal for restructuring the ELCA. The churchwide organizational restructuring discussion is likely to be a source of much discussion, whose outcome will shape the future of our denomination in complex and far-reaching ways.

Goodsoil encourages you to consider attending the assembly in Orlando. Goodsoil participants and volunteers will sing in the hallway, distribute items, vigil in the plenary hall, pray in the worship hall, and gracefully engage with voting members in the hall and at meals. We need your presence and gifts at CWA-2011.

The Goodsoil website will provide the full details as they are solidified. Please remember to check www.goodsoil.org often for updates. ▼



The Rev. Dr. Shauna K. Hannan joined the Southern Seminary faculty in the Summer of 2008. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Homiletics from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Communications from Concordia College.

Prior to coming to Southern Seminary, Professor Hannan has been an Adjunct Professor, Instructor, Teaching Fellow, and Associate Admissions Director at various theological institutions. She is an ordained minister of the ELCA and has served in parish ministry in

Minnesota. She also participated in the first Theologians' Roundtable sponsored by LC/NA at the *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters* conference in 2010.

Professor Hannan has studied five languages (Spanish, German, French, Hebrew, and Koine Greek) and enjoys teaching practical theology and speech, in addition to homiletics.

When not in the classroom she is always planning her next trip, usually along a "road less traveled" either abroad or within the United States.



2011 HRC Clergy Call

for Justice and Equality

By **Rev. Shawn Brandon**

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God...” — MICAH 6:8

As an expression of living out this biblical call from the prophet Micah, over 250 faith leaders, ordained and lay, from every state of the country and representing more than

25 denominations and faith traditions, gathered in Washington, D.C. May 22–24 to participate in the 2011 Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Clergy Call for Justice and Equality. This gathering is held every two years and mobilizes and prepares people of faith to speak up on matters of LGBT equality with their

150 people from 27 nations representing 46 LGBT groups gathered in fellowship and advocacy.

Above: Joe Solmonese, Human Rights Campaign President, addresses the gathered clergy and laity prior to their visits to Congress as faith leaders for equality. Right: Mounting the steps to Congress, religious leaders on the way to tell Congress that their faith compels them to advocate for full equality.

elected leaders in Washington, in their home states, and in their communities. Among those present this year were Emily Eastwood and several other Lutherans from Minnesota and various other regions of the United States.

The theme for this year’s gathering was “Leadership for Justice in Complex times.” And indeed, these are complex times. While a number of recent surveys indicate that as a nation we are moving forward at a strikingly rapid rate on every measure of LGBT acceptance and equality, there

continue to be efforts that, if successful, would further injustice, inequality, and prejudice. In the midst of these complex times, those who attended Clergy Call 2011 were inspired, trained, and strengthened in raising our diverse voices and our reach as moral agents for justice, equality, and protection for LGBT people and for all those who suffer.

Clergy Call 2011 was an amazing event, featuring great speakers, panels, and lobbying. In visits with senators and representatives, participants addressed several pieces of legislation that are at various stages of consideration. These included the Defense of Marriage Act, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the Student Non-Discrimination Act, and the Safe Schools Improvement Act. We were prepared for these visits with talking points and stories of those in our faith communities who have been directly affected by the bullying, loss of employment, and relationship strains that these particular bills would address. Perhaps most importantly, we raised our voices as people of faith. Motivated by our faith convictions, our witness provided a much-needed balance to others who also speak from a faith context but whose work seems to lead to intolerance and injustice.

Throughout this important event, we were reminded that we are called by our faith to lead one another and ourselves toward a relationship with the divine, toward justice and toward community. Sharon Groves, Director for the Faith and Religion program of HRC, told us that she hoped “you will feel strengthened in your connections with each other, strengthened in your calling to justice and mobilized for the work ahead.” Indeed we were.

To be sure, the work ahead will continue well beyond Clergy Call 2011. There is much justice yet to “do.” Clergy Call 2013 will be a very important part of that work. I hope you will consider joining me and other Lutherans!

For more information about Clergy Call and the work of the Human Rights Campaign, visit www.hrc.org. ▼



LC/NA Board Welcomes New Members

At a June 21 teleconference meeting of the Board of Directors of Lutherans Concerned/North America, the board elected the following:



Nicole Garcia was elected to serve as Co-Chair, an officer position, having previously served as Secretary to the Board and Transgender Representative. It was in 2003 that Nicole first became involved with the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program at St. Paul Lutheran

Church in Denver. Since then, Nicole has presented workshops and participated in panels concerning gender identity and spirituality in Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Houston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and throughout the Denver/Boulder (Colorado) area.

Nicole holds membership in many LGBTQ organizations, to include: the Latino/a Roundtable sponsored by the PSR Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies in Religion and Ministry, Out Boulder, Boulder County PFLAG, Boulder Out Door Fund,

Interpersonal Communication from California State University, Fresno. He studied for his MDiv. at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and Wartburg Theological Seminary. His doctoral work was at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago in Ancient Semitic Languages. He has served as a parish pastor in Joliet, Illinois, and Melbourne Beach, Florida. The Lutheran Campus Pastor at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, for the past 18 years and an adjunct professor of counseling, health and wellness, he has research fellowships at Hebrew University, Jerusalem; University of Nice; University of Toronto; and was appointed a research fellow at the Pontifical Biblical Institute by Pope John Paul II.

Chris has been a lifelong advocate and ally, working for farm labor equality in Central California as a high school student to working for full inclusion in our church. He is the Senior Research Fellow and Lead Trainer for the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute (PVPI), which works at preventing and ending all types of violence in society, concentrating on bullying and harassment prevention and preventing violence and suicide among youth and young adults. PVPI works closely with the US Department of Justice in aspects of ally-building and recognizing and responding to violence among youth and young adults in numerous violence prevention areas.



Jeannine Janson was elected to serve as Vice Chair of Development, an officer position. Jeannine has previously served as Co-Chair of LC/NA from 2002–2008, after serving as the West/Northwest Regional Director for two years. In addition to serving as

Co-Chair, Jeannine was the Campaign Director for *ONE VOICE*, the \$2,000,000 joint appeal to benefit LC/NA, Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries (now Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries), and Wingspan Ministry of St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church.

In 2008 Jeannine was given LC/NA's distinguished service award, which was renamed at that time as the Janson Distinguished Service Award. Jeannine has also served as President and Fundraising Chair of Friends of St. Francis Childcare Center in San Francisco.

Jeannine worked in San Francisco as a legal secretary for 35 years. In 2006 Jeannine and her partner, Mari Irvin, moved to Yachats, Oregon. In 2008 Jeannine began working as Administrative Assistant at Yachats Community Presbyterian Church while remaining a Lutheran. Jeannine and Mari are still members of St. Francis Lutheran where they met in 1992 and were married in 1998.

LC/NA is excited to **welcome new members** in new roles to the board.

One Colorado, TransFaith Online, the Interfaith Working Group, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and National Center for Transgender Equality. Nicole is halfway through a master's program in counseling at the University of Colorado Denver with the intention of becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Nicole has served as a Voting Member at the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly and at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, and is looking forward to serving at the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Orlando.



Rev. Chris Berry was elected to serve as Co-Chair, an officer position. Chris has been a member of the Goodsoil Legislative Team since January 2004. After serving as that team's parliamentary consultant he was appointed the convener/chair of the team in December 2007.

A member of LC/NA for almost 30 years, he received a BA in Classical Rhetoric and an MA in



Kurt Neumann was elected to serve as Secretary to the Board, an officer position. Kurt served as the first Youth and Young Adult Representative for Lutherans Concerned/ North America from

2005–2008. After receiving a Dual Bachelor's degree in European Studies and German in 2008, he worked for the U.S. State Department in Berlin, Germany. He returned to the U.S. later that year and has since been working at the Marriott Austin Downtown as a Front Desk Manager. Continuing his passion for International Relations, he began his Master's degree in Diplomacy in 2010.

While on the board of directors, he advocated at annual Lutheran Campus Ministry gatherings for greater youth participation in LC/NA. He also worked during the summers of 2006 and 2007 at the LC/NA St. Paul headquarters to prepare the organization for the 2006 Biennial Assembly in Toronto and the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Chicago.

He lives in Austin, Texas and is an avid runner. His home congregation is First English Lutheran. He still participates with Lutheran Campus Ministry Austin while continuing his Master's studies. He is excited to rejoin the LC Board in this leadership role.

Two board members were elected earlier this year:



Phil Soucy was elected to Director of Communications in March. Phil has served as the Director of Communications for Lutherans Concerned/ North America from 2005–2010 and again

since March 2011. Prior to that, he had extensive experience in both governmental and industry practice of public relations, concentrating on media relations and external issues management. He served as a career Army Infantry Officer and as an Army Public Affairs Officer, culminating with service as one of the press spokespersons for the Secretary and Department of the Army.

continued on page 14

"In Honor of..."

In Honor of...

Honored by...

Rev. Kirk Anderson & Sheri Brown	In honor of the witness and ministry of Rev. Kirk Anderson & Sheri Brown	Allen & Marie Harper
Allen Blaich, Diane Fraser, Jim Lokken, Marie Kent, & Howard Erickson	In honor of Allen Blaich and Diane Fraser and in memory of Jim Lokken, Marie Kent, and Howard Erickson, the founders of Lutherans Concerned for Gay People	Jeannine Janson
Adam Bost	In honor of Adam Bost, a great son and friend	Sharon & John Bost
Sheri Brown	To God's Spirit moving within Sheri Brown	Rev. Kirk E. Anderson
Joe Brown	In memory of Joe Brown	Mike Crandall
Emily Eastwood	In honor of Emily Eastwood and the faithful staff of LC/NA	Cheryl A. Persigehl
Robert Matthew Eastwood	In memory of Robert Matthew Eastwood Deanna Eichler & Leslee Froehlich; Lisa Mueller & Laurie Hamre; Martha L. Scheel; Deborah Wilson	Robert & Martha Eastwood,
Joanne Engquist & Kari Lipke	In honor of Joanne Engquist & Kari Lipke Joel Abrahamson & Dorea Ruggles; Janet Jensen; Chris Pollari & Ann Fereatz; and 4 anonymous	
Roberto Flores	In honor of Father Roberto Flores	Kenneth E. Rozek
Daniel Fujimoto	In memory of Daniel Fujimoto	Deanna, Bennie, Kevin, and Kathie Badgett
James Goodyear	In honor of the ordination of James Goodyear	Barbara & Michael Wagner
James Curtis Hill	In memory of my brother, James C. Hill, Sr. of Topsham, Maine	Rev. Anita Hill
James Curtis Hill	In memory of James Curtis Hill	Jan Bailey & Emily Eastwood
Paul & Karen Jolly	In honor of Paul & Karen Jolly for their faithful work on behalf of LC/NA	Jeannine Janson & Mari Irvin
Robert Joppa	In honor of Robert Joppa's MBA graduation	Marti Scheel
Marie Kent	In memory of Marie Kent, one of the founders of Lutherans Concerned	Rev. Barbara Lundblad & Nicole Johnson
LGBTQI teens	For all LGBTQI teens and young people that they might know that God is a God of love...	John Sunderman
Jim Lokken	In memory of The Rev. Jim Lokken	Mary Farmer
Rev. Jim Siefkes	In honor of Rev. Jim Siefkes, our amazing ally who made possible the meeting in Minneapolis in June of 1974 that resulted in the founding of Lutherans Concerned for Gay People	Jeannine Janson
Donna Simon	In honor of Donna Simon!	Pamela Sieving
Bob Snook & John Nelson	In memory of Bob Snook and in honor of John Nelson	Richard Israel
Dale Truscott and Kin Xuxa	In recognition of the work of Dale Truscott and Kin Xuxa	The Jennifer M. Lee and Jeffrey S. Chapski Family Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Jerry & Val Vagts	In honor of Jerry & Val Vagts	Shirley Gangstad
Jay Wiesner and Steve Keiser	In honor of Pastors Jay Wiesner and Steve Keiser's reception onto the ELCA Clergy roster—and in THANKS for this great opportunity to pick Pastor Chris's pocket!!!	Martha L. Scheel
	In honor of the ELCA community in Idaho Falls, Idaho	Wayne & Cherie Stevens
	In honor of the work of friends Sheri and Kirk	John Jorde

Ross Murray Moves to GLAAD

On May 12, staff, local board members, and friends gathered at a St. Paul restaurant to say thank-you to Ross Murray for his fine service as Deputy Director of LC/NA. Ross has been



RICHARD W. GARNETT

Ross Murray preaching at the rite of reception for Rev. Jay Wiesner

selected by GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) to serve as Director of Religion, Faith and

Ross's new job at GLAAD will place him in a prominent national role working with the media to foster full inclusion.

Values in New York City. Ross began work there on May 17.

Executive Director Emily Eastwood said, "I am at once delighted for Ross and

saddened for LC/NA. We knew it was only a matter of time before Ross's unique combination of youthful energy, gifts, skills, passion and charisma would move him beyond LC/NA to a more public ministry within the wider movement. While I will miss Ross and his contributions to the organization, I am confident that we will continue to benefit from his work through GLAAD."

Ross Murray said, "This is an opportunity for me to continue the good work I was doing at Lutherans Concerned, but expand it to a much broader base. The voice of religious communities is so important in shaping the public discourse around LGBT people. Lutherans Concerned has been a leader in using relationships and faith-based community

organizing to make change in the congregation and the denomination. I have learned so much about communication and the power of relationship at Lutherans Concerned and I'm excited to apply some of those same skills to help lift up the voices of faithful LGBT people and their allies to the broader society."

Ross's new job at GLAAD will place him in a prominent national role working with the media to foster full inclusion. Ross will be responsible for lifting up pro-LGBT voices of faith in the media and collaborating with organizations like Lutherans Concerned to increase acceptance, respect and understanding of LGBT Americans in religious communities. Ross will also educate the media in

their understanding of the concerns of LGBT people of faith and their aspirations to be recognized as full participants in church and society regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

LC/NA is grateful for Ross's service to LC/NA and is pleased for his moving onto an even larger stage and wider responsibilities, making the public and communities of faith aware of the contributions of LGBT people in our nation and its inextricably intertwined secular and religious lives.

Ross plans to remain intimately involved with *The Naming Project* and its summer camp, of which he is co-founder and Program Director. ▼

LC/NA Board

continued from page 13

After retirement from the Army, Phil worked in public relations in the aerospace industry, finishing his paid working career in the London headquarters of a global company as Director of Media Relations. He lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his partner. They are proud to be counted among the 18,000 legally married in California. Phil is a member of the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has served on synod council and executive council, and is active in various roles in his home congregation.



JamieAnn Meyers was elected to transgender representative in April when her predecessor became secretary.

JamieAnn is a transexual woman who is active in the GLBTQIA community as a lead trainer with the Minnesota GLBTA Campus Alliance, a board member of the Minnesota Trans Health Coalition, and a member of Lutherans Concerned in North America. She also interacts with GenderFold in the Coalition of ONA churches of the UCC. She takes a social justice and anti-oppression approach to her activism and advocacy.

JamieAnn retired in 2010 as Professor Emerita of Geoscience at Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota, and is now using her 39 years of classroom experience to do education on GLBTQIA concerns in secular and faith communities. Her work focuses on advocacy for Transgender and Bisexual people, and on trainings for allies across the boundaries of all GLBTQIA communities. Originally from Pennsylvania, she is a 31-year resident of Winona, Minnesota, has been married to her wife Peggy for 44 years, and has two adult children and three grandchildren, all of whom live in the area around Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. ▼

European Forum “Surrounded by Friends”

By **Phil Soucy**

Being surrounded by friends takes on an entirely new meaning when they have come from great distances, speak languages you have never heard, and you have not met them before, yet

you know on a much deeper level that they are truly your friends, on whom you can depend.

That was the sense one had at the Berlin meeting of the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups, May 4-8. The European Forum is an association of associations, pan-European. Attending the conference were 150 people from 27 nations representing 46 LGBT groups, gathered in fellowship and advocacy, sharing their faith, their commitment to full inclusion, their mutual friendship, their successes and challenges, and worship.

“Surrounded by Friends” was the themed title of this the 29th annual meeting of the Forum. On the business agenda were the adoption of a mission statement that went beyond the simple gathering in solidarity, the election of one of two co-presidents, the reception of new groups, and the discussion of financial matters essential to the organization, including the adoption of a budget.

150 people from **27 nations** representing 46 LGBT groups gathered in **fellowship and advocacy**.

Additionally, there were programmatic plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions and “marketplace” opportunities to share your organization’s work and learn from that of others.



Berlin Holocaust Memorial

Participating from LC/NA were Executive Director Emily Eastwood, Communications Director Phil Soucy, LC/NA International Programs Committee member Marti Scheel, as well as LC/NA members, Bob Gibeling and Markus Mueller, also there as a delegate from Homosexuelle und Kirche (HuK). LC/NA was present as a non-voting delegation.

Professor Dr. Hans-Joachim Sander, University of Salzburg, presented a stimulating and provocative paper, “Human rights of ‘dangerous people’ — the political-theological issue of heterotopic human beings,” about how we can be viewed as both endangered and endangering by institutions, fellow Christians, and each other. His presentation gave a fascinating and encompassing understanding of the framework by which organizations approach their work, for or against us. A copy of his paper can be had by asking communications@lcna.org for one.

Emily Eastwood addressed the Forum during the first plenary session, speaking of our mission, vision, values, current work and achievements/challenges. She spoke of working to create the vision that we seek, following the path of advocacy as Christians secure in the redemptive faith in Christ and the righteousness of our cause as part of the good news of the Gospel we are all called to proclaim. She spoke of the challenges shared by the Forum and LC/NA as Christians with a message to the world about LGBT people, and as LGBT people of faith with a message to the LGBT community about what Christianity is really about. Her remarks were received with a standing ovation.

Marti Scheel co-presented a workshop on the situation in Uganda, about the proposed legislation that would codify hatred and deadly discrimination against Ugandan LGBT people, ultimately providing for the possibility of a death sentence for repeated consensual encounters between adults. This legislation was on the agenda of the Parliament at the end of the session in May, but not taken up for debate. It may return in the next parliament. We have reported previously on the direct connection between this legislation, its Ugandan sponsors and the instigating and supportive actions by U.S. homophobic evangelists and anti-gay advocates, including representatives of Exodus International, Defend the Family International, and the International Healing Foundation.

In the Open Marketplace of ideas sessions, LC/NA had a stand of information and held excellent detailed discussions with conference participants. Asked to bring food that represented North America, we provided Oreo and Girl Scout Thin Mint cookies - which were eagerly received. Excellent contacts were made for follow-up and for future collaborative work with the European Forum and some of its member organizations.

Information about the European Forum and its activities is available at www.euroforumlgbtchristians.eu. ▼

LC/NA Developing Anti-Bullying Curriculum

Over the past several months, the LC/NA staff has been working diligently on an educational guide to anti-bullying work. Drawing on research from a variety of sources—the United States Government, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute (PVPI), to name a few,—we are nearing completion on an activity and discussion guide about bullying.

The curriculum will be divided into four one-hour segments designed for use in adult forum or education sessions in congregations. Grounded in scripture, they will focus on establishing a shared understanding about bullying: debunking common myths, developing common language around bullying, learning what techniques are effective in combating bullying when we see it, discussing our experiences with bullying in our own lives, and finding ways to create systematic change so bullying will be less prevalent in the future.

The first section lays out the essentials of bullying information, from where it occurs to frameworks for discussing it as people of faith. This session is foundational; if a congregation chooses to use only one, this is the one.

Ideally, conversations about bullying will include everyone from youth to elders. Bullying occurs everywhere, but because much of the work against it occurs in schools, it is critical to include current students in such conversations. To encourage this, the second module of the curriculum is dedicated to intergenerational discussion.

Our third piece focuses on bullying intervention and prevention, addressing possible motivations underlying bullying behaviors and what sorts of actions in the moment could stop them. It also begins the conversation about systemic changes necessary to prevent bullying from happening in the first place.

Action-planning fills the final module. We want to give congregations time to explore what they can do in their own communities to prevent bullying. To this end, we provide both potential actions they can start with and an appendix of organizations, books, websites and other

resources they may find useful. Foremost among these is the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute, whose staff has been instrumental in the formulation of LC/NA's curriculum. PVPI and other violence prevention groups, anti-bullying organizations, and diversity education coalitions working in partnership with schools and congregations will be crucial in turning our knowledge about bullying into its eradication from the world around us.

This curriculum is slated to be completed by mid to late June, when it will become available for free download on the LC/NA website.

Presbyterians Change Policy Amid Twin Cities Windstorm

On May 10th, while tornadoes raged nearby, the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA), the largest Presbyterian denomination in the United States, reached the number of local presbyteries required to approve the change in policy to allow for the ordination and service of LGBT ministers without the requirement of “chastity in singleness,” as the previous language put it.

A constitutional amendment was passed by the PCUSA in national assembly in July of 2010 initiating a ratification process requiring passage by a majority of the 173 regional presbyteries. The amendment was ratified with the approval of the 87th presbytery, located in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. The effort to reach this history-making change in policy has lasted for 40

years. Four times in the last 14 years the amendment to remove the prohibition for service was passed by the national body, but failed to get more than 47 of the 87 ratifications required.

The ratification will return the qualifications for ordained leadership within the denomination to those rightly based upon faith and character, not marital status or sexual orientation.

Emily Eastwood, Executive Director, Lutherans Concerned/North America, said of this historic victory for full participation, “We give thanks to God for the faith, love, grace, and, frankly, stubborn endurance of our ministry partners in the Presbyterian movement for LGBT equality in church and society. The previous order was neither good nor salutary in its limiting of service as an attempt to subvert the call and will of God on the basis of human prejudice and Bibliolatry. The witness of Christ's relentless love in the lives and service of LGBT Presbyterians is and has been richly evident.

“With new policy, this church has again made possible the confirmation of God-given calls to ministry. Restoration, reconciliation, and an inclusive future wherein all ministers will be judged by a single standard will unfold over time, requiring the same diligence, courage, and time as that necessitated to achieve the change in policy. We join our Presbyterian full-communion partners in this effort even as we rejoice in this as a victory for LGBT people everywhere.”

Michael Adee, Executive Director and Field Organizer for More Light Presbyterians, said, “It is necessary and absolutely okay to celebrate this moment in the life and witness of our Church, the end of categorical discrimination against God's LGBT children which was wrong in the first place. What a journey this work for justice and equality has been. The thousands of prayers, faithful conversations, sharing of hopes and dreams are all part of building a Church that reflects God's heart and a world that respects all persons.”

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a full communion partner of the ELCA. Full communion is when two churches develop a relationship based on a common confessing of the Christian faith and a mutual recognition of baptism and sharing of the Lord's Supper. ▼

Something in the Air in the Twin Cities

Each of these historic actions took place in the Twin Cities. Might it be the Holy Spirit at work?

- Lutheran Church in America votes to allow women's ordination 1970
- Episcopal Church (USA) votes to allow women's ordination 1976
- Episcopal Church (USA) confirms Gene Robinson's election as Bishop 2003
- In the midst of a tornado, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America votes to allow partnered LGBT Ministers to serve on roster 2009
- Presbyterian Church (USA) National Convention approves policy change that would allow partnered LGBT ministers (requires ratification by local presbyteries) 2010
- With tornados nearby, Presbyterian Church (USA) ratifies national action, allowing partnered LGBT ministers to serve 2011