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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.

This issue of *Concord* is gathered around the coverage of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's recently completed Biennial National Convention. This year's National Convention was significant in that a new bishop, the Rev. Susan Johnson, was elected, replacing the Rev. Ray Schultz who is retiring in September for health reasons. It was also significant in that the National Church Council resolution encouraging synods to develop ways to minister to LGBT people in same-gender relationships, including the possibility of blessing them, was defeated. Also significant was the joint day of meeting with the Anglican Church of Canada General Synod, gathered in the same city as the ELCIC convention. Our next issue will be gathered about the events and results of the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly being held in August, the report about the run-up synod assemblies being in this issue.

Canadian Lutherans Meet in Manitoba

Encouraging and Discouraging Outcomes from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's National Convention

The Eleventh Biennial National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) took place June 21-24, 2007. Held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as it has been in years past, there were several notable aspects of this convention that made it stand out from previous ones.

First, a new bishop was elected. That in itself is not unusual; bishops have been elected to 4-year terms of office at previous conventions. But this election was out of sequence. Bishop Ray Schultz had been elected to a second 4-year term in 2005, but had announced recently that, for personal and health reasons, he would be resigning his office and retiring this Fall, creating the necessity to elect a new bishop.

Second, reacting to the defeat of a motion at the 2005 National Convention that would have allowed for a so-called local option for pastors and congregations to bless same-gender, committed relationships, the National Church Council (NCC) brought to this convention NCC Resolution 22, recommending that the 2007 National Convention ask the synods to undertake discussions about how best to provide for ministry to LGBT persons in same-gender committed relationships including the possibility

of blessing those relationships.

Third, the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) held its General Synod in Winnipeg at the same time, at which they were also electing a new national bishop and facing an issue similar to the Lutheran Resolution 22.

The two national gatherings spent a day in joint session on Wednesday, June 21, meeting at the Convention Center in downtown Winnipeg. The overall theme for the joint meeting celebrating six years of full communion was "The River of Life, the Everlasting Wellspring, the Fountain of Resurrection." The 8-hour day was structured as a liturgy, punctuated with presentations, discussions, activities and gifted speakers. The participants were divided into 115 tables of Lutherans, Anglicans, men, women, young and no longer young. Time was given over to understanding the differences and similarities between the denominations. Throughout the day

continued on page 11

The Editor

DALE TRUSCOTT



So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

—MATTHEW 6:34

As I completed the editorial process for this issue, I looked at this verse from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and said to myself, "Wow! Do I need to hear this!" Maybe we all need to hear it.

The outcome of the ELCIC National Convention in Manitoba was quite mixed. Resolution 22, encouraging their synods to develop ways to best minister to people in committed same-gender relationships, including the possibility of blessing them, failed but a respected and, we

rise to meet the tide of national diversity and affirmation. We in LC/NA in the United States are struggling to encourage the ELCA to rise above the morass of immorality and injustice in the name of religion that characterizes a lot of the leadership here.

I had hoped that the actions in Canada would have given a clarion call that could be heard

*"to rise to meet the **tide of diversity** in Canada...to **rise above** the morass of... **injustice** in America"*

think, supportive bishop was elected. Always the cynic, I read the positive spin our authors in this issue place on the "improvement" in the number of progressive votes with chagrin. Hence, my need to hear Jesus preach.

My Canadian brothers and sisters are struggling in a somewhat different context than we in the next republic to the south. Canada has affirmed same-sex unions legally. The burdens that American LGBT couples bear legally and in relation to the military, taxes, etc., have been largely lifted in Canada. LC Canada is struggling to get the ELCIC to

across the lakes to the pier in Chicago in August. That call is now muted.

On the other hand, the results that you will read about in the synods of the ELCA are nothing short of amazing! We have exceeded our most realistic expectations at getting Memorials 1, 2, and 3 to pass in synods. The groundswell of the Spirit that emerged in February in Atlanta at the Schmeling hearing has swept through the church. Will that groundswell wash over the Assembly with justice and new life for us all? I am anxious!

And yet, while I still have not found a parish here in

Orlando where I can listen to the joy of the gospel preached to me with sensitivity and power and where I might share in the continuing presence of Jesus of Nazareth in simple foods around the Table, I still turn to Jesus and the gospel every week, study and listen, and write about the texts and their implications for love and justice in my personal blog. [If you are interested, go to www.daletruscott.com.] Today, I hear him gently but firmly encouraging me not to worry. Tomorrow, August, will bring worries of its own, but today's troubles are enough for today.

There are many, many people who are going to be there to make a faithful, engaging witness among their colleagues in ministry, the members of the assembly, the leaders of our church in Chicago. Surely there is fear and anxiety about how that witness will be received and what will be the outcome of the risk, the courage, the butterflies in the stomach, the hopes in the hearts! There will be people speaking at microphones before a sea of auspicious-looking people. There will be armies of volunteers attending to the tiniest of details, making sure that the **goodsoil** presence is faithful, caring, loving but clear and unmistakable. And then there will be our leaders in LC/NA. Weary will be an understatement for them.

I am often reminded of hymn poetry. It comes from a lifetime of singing profound songs (many of which are, lamentably, being left behind). Here's a verse that is apt for us to sing forthose engaged in the struggle in the days ahead. It is stanza 3 of a hymn by 19th century poet Daniel March:

*If you cannot be a watchman,
Standing high on Zion's wall,
Pointing out the path to heaven,
continued on page 3*

Lutherans Concerned/ North America...

- Has the simultaneous goals of affirming the God-given nature of sexual orientation, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through inclusive worship and promoting positive changes in all expressions of the Lutheran church.
- Is an independent, membership-supported organization which has ministered to thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and heterosexual people over 30+ years of service.
- Reaches out to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities across the U.S.A., Mexico and Canada. Its members also serve as resources to local Lutheran congregations, their pastors, and elected leaders.

We invite you to join us as we learn to better love ourselves and share that love with others.

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Co-
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LEN WEISER

It's finally Summer! In my family, we can't wait for Memorial Day, as it's a time to put the jet ski in the water and plan any and all open weekend days to be at the beach. The kids in my son's classroom get antsy because school is almost over, and I get antsy because homework will soon cease! Typically, this time of year is for rest, relaxation, renewal and for time with family and friends.

Well, some of that is true for LC/NA but it's

*"Whom shall I send? And **who will go for us?**" **Send us!***

definitely not a time for rest and relaxation. Quite the opposite is happening. As you read through this issue of the *Concord*, you will certainly see that we (as an organization) are not resting and relaxing. We have a LOT on our plates right now, and I'm not the least bit antsy about it all.

The ELCIC had their national convention in June. The ELCA will be having its Assembly in August. A lot of energy has been expended working with synodical teams on resolutions to be passed and memorialized to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly dealing with ordination issues affecting our LGBT brothers and sisters called to ordained ministry. Our RIC Core Team trainings continue, always receiving positive reviews. The *ONE VOICE* campaign is wrapping up.

That's just this summer's activities. We are also very busy working on things to come in the future. Planning is actively underway for our next leadership retreat for board members, committee members, regional coordinators and staff this coming September. Our *Hearts on Fire* planning committee is active and meeting monthly via phone and occasionally in person.

There is never a dull moment within LC/NA.

Under the direction of Emily Eastwood, Executive Director, we are continuing to grow the staff and structure of our administrative office. A Lutheran Volunteer Corps Intern, Kate Stoeckel, joined the staff in June as did LC/NA's Young Adult Rep, Kurt Neumann. Kurt will be with us for the summer, and Kate will be with us for a year. In

addition, we will soon begin our search for a Development Director.

This is just what I know about. I mentioned nothing of what our regional coordinators are doing in the field as well as chapters and members, which are the heart of why we exist as an organization. So much for rest and relaxation! And thank God, because this is all leading to renewal and reformation in the Church.

One of my favorite Bible verses comes from Isaiah 6:8:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

It feels to me that we are responding to the Lord's question, "Whom shall I send?" LC/NA has answered that call and said boldly, "SEND US!" We are indeed living out our calling as Christian believers seeking justice in the world.

I do pray, though, that amidst all our work you take the time to also rest and relax. Spend time with your chosen loved ones and enjoy one another's company. Take time to be with yourself and be renewed so that we have the strength to plow full steam ahead this summer to seek out justice in the Church. We can do no less! Godspeed! ▼

From the Editor

continued from page 2

*Offering life and peace to all,
With your prayers and with your bounties
You can do what God demands;
You can be like faithful Aaron,
Holding up the prophet's hands.*

What is it about this text that has always brought a tear to my eye as I have sung it? It has been the knowledge that, as a pastor, others in ministry with me, my flock so-to-speak, have had to hold up my arms so often, so constantly, or else I could not have accomplished the work I was called by God to do.

Hold up the arms of those who preach. Hold up the arms of those who preside at worship. Hold up the arms of those who vigil, those who volunteer in so many ways to witness faithfully for full inclusion. Surround them, even from afar, like a host of faithful Aarons holding up the prophets' arms. And as we do, hear Jesus saying, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow!" ▼

Executive Director



EMILY EASTWOOD

I learned from childhood that having a concrete plan with a timeline is a virtue. In fact, even now breakfast conversation with my folks often starts with “what’s the plan?” My partner, Jan, who has a glorious penchant for the spontaneous, privately rolls her eyes, and then plots to throw in a surprise or two. Jan is open to the wonder of the Spirit in the moment, and after nearly 20 years together, she’s started to rub off on me, well, a little. I’m still a planner, but I’ve begun to look for the Spirit at work in the moment opening doors that just weren’t in the plan.

In June, I attended two conventions: the Southwest California Synod Assembly, which was held at California Lutheran in Thousand Oaks near Los Angeles and the ELCIC National Convention in

“May I **borrow** your **Bible**?” “**No**, I don’t think you can... do you even have a Bible?”

Winnipeg. I attended the ELCIC convention as a consultant. In this issue of *Concord*, the coverage of the convention is extensive, and, I believe, better told through the words of Canadians. LC/NA and I remain committed to assist Lutherans Concerned in Canada and the leadership of the ELCIC as requested, and we look forward to helping build the movement for change well beyond the confines of Ontario and points east.

True to LC form in Southwest California, there were lots of plans in place for the weekend. LC/Los Angeles hosted a festive reception at the home of (former bishop) Paul and Shirley Egertson. There was an RIC workshop, which was packed with a host of the hungry, longing for their congregations to become RIC. There was the usual organizing of voting members, leafletting of brochures and the document on the trial of Bradley Schmeling—all part of the plan. Worship and Bible Study were wonderful and creative. Okay, so I’m an assembly junkie.

Still, since I was looking, it seemed the Spirit was palpable at almost every gathering. There was a lot of love and joy in the room. The bishop, Dean Nelson, danced with his crosier during the entrance hymn, large paper birds flew above the crowd. It appeared most people reveled in the wonder of being the Body of Christ gathered... but not all.

The first big surprise was that Dr. Guy Irwin of Cal Lutheran and I were given voice for the assembly. This required a two-thirds majority. With voice I was asked to serve as a resource person for the assembly, I spoke at a hearing on the memorials. At the request of the Bishop I also answered a question from a voting member during the debate on whether the term “chaste” as used in our memorial meant the same as “celibate.” I replied that the word “chaste” is used in two sentences in *Vision and Expectations*, one referring to persons who are single and one to refer to the relationship between spouses. The intent of “chaste” in the memorial was the same as the intent of *V&E* when speaking of the relationship between spouses—relationships of fidelity, mutuality, respect and commitment. The voting member then wanted to know how the church was going to police that? If asked, I would have said, “The same way the church polices heterosexual relationships.” The Bishop took the question as rhetorical and left it floating.

When the debate on the memorials began, I rose to take a place in line at the center microphone. As I approached, however, a tall woman with a soft cover Bible and a red card stepped out of the row beside me. I chose to step back so that she could precede me.

Bishop Nelson rotated the microphones alternating between pros and cons. When her turn came, the woman ahead of me opened her Bible and read from Romans 1—the natural and unnatural passage. She was resolute, said the meaning of the verses was self evident in opposing same-sex behavior, and complained that none of the speakers in favor of policy change spoke from scripture.

Since I was not seated with the voting members, my briefcase with my black leather-bound micro-Bible was at the back of the room. One of the keys to Biblical debate is to keep reading. The best response to Romans 1 is Romans 2: “therefore, do not judge.” I looked around for someone with a Bible that I could borrow. The only person I could find close by with a Bible was the one sitting on the end of the row next to the woman who had just spoken. She had a matching Bible in a coordinating soft cover with pen. I took a deep breath and asked myself if the Spirit had just opened a door or was I on a fool’s errand.

Taking a clue from Jan, I decided I was ready for an end cap surprise. I leaned over and whispered to the woman, “May I borrow your Bible?” After a couple of seconds of looking at the book, she turned

RIC Settings

Added to the Roster since last issue

Christ Lutheran Church, New York, New York

East Bay Lutheran Parish, Oakland, California

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Centerville, Iowa

Higher Ground Lutheran - Episcopal Campus Ministry, Texas State University, San Marcos

Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Arizona, Tucson

Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

St. Mark Lutheran Church, Pleasant Hill, California

St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bronx, New York

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

to me and in a voice that shook with some unknown fear or anger, she said, "...No, I don't think you can... get your own Bible... do you even have a Bible?"

Inside I was stunned and deeply saddened, but miraculously I kept my face and voice calm. By this time she was starting to tear up. I summoned every ounce of grace I could muster, and quietly said, "Why yes I do. It's at the back of the room, and I don't want to lose my place in line." With shaking hand and tears now flowing, she handed me the book. She did not look at me.

I stood there at the microphone with her Bible in my hands open to Romans 2 for what seemed an eternity. The Bishop never called on me to speak, but a later speech from the microphone at my left did quote the passage from memory, "therefore, do not judge." As debate ended,

I closed the Bible and returned it to my sister in Christ with my thanks. I wondered if she would leave it in the trash on her way out, since in her eyes an "unclean" person had most certainly defiled it.

Both women held up their red cards, but Memorial 1 on policy change passed by a healthy majority. I was pleased. Still, through the night and to this day, I am haunted by her response, so unexpected. Was it really possible that those who oppose us would go so far as to withhold the Good News from God's LGBT children?

But, then I remember. She gave me the book. Somewhere inside she knew it was wrong to say "no." In those moments of decision, the Spirit held her in the creative tension between her will and God's will. I suspect, with me, she is still thinking about that surprise. I know I'm still chewing. I

hope she is too. Certainly, this was not part of the plan.

In these final days as we prepare for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, be assured there is a plan. I hope that many of you will join us in Chicago to put that plan in action. I trust that the Spirit has some surprises in store for all of us. Win or lose, I have faith that God, the one who creates, saves, and accompanies will be with us, leading us on the path toward justice. I pray that the Advocate will be palpably present holding all in that creative tension between our will and God's will. And when we look back, I hope we will be able to say, that we and the church we love were transformed by grace. May we look for those moments of opportunity in graceful engagement with our siblings in Christ. And may we be ready for the surprise. Amen. Let it be so. ▼

In the midst of Holy Week...

Members of Portland Metro Chapter of LC/NA and Central Lutheran Church's Evangelism Team had the opportunity to provide fellowship and a meal to the Equality Riders of Soulforce.

As stated on their website: "The purpose of Soulforce is freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance." The logo for Soulforce includes the faces of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi.

Equality Ride, in its second year, is a road trip organized to talk to students and faculty on

campus universities about spiritual violence. Spiritual violence is the misuse of religion to sanction the condemnation and rejection of any of God's children. There are two buses traveling the country, one on the West route and one on the East route.

On April 5, the members of the West Bus visited George Fox University in Newburg, Oregon. When the university was first advised that they were on the bus schedule, the administration contacted churches for support of their policies toward homosexual behavior. George Fox had planned to limit access to the campus from members of Equality Ride. After witnessing the visit of the group on other campuses, George Fox opened their doors and allowed access to the entire campus as long as classes were not disrupted.

Equality Ride contacts the colleges and



Equality rider Cylest Brooks sings for Central Lutheran members.

the city administrators prior to their visits to get permits and permission for their visits. Their acts of civil rights to assemble and speak freely are advertised well before their visits.

Central Lutheran Church, as a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, and Portland Metro Chapter of LC/NA were proud to be able to offer a time of respite and fellowship to a group of young people who are dedicating their time and energy to sharing the word that we are all God's children and entitled to full inclusion in our Christian communities.

—Sue Cushing, Administrative Assistant
Central Lutheran Church
Portland, Oregon ▼



A Resurrection Story

By **Laura Bourdo**

[Editor's note: This story was originally told without names to the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod as a "Celebration Story," asking for prayers. It is shared with us courtesy of Rob Moore, Assistant to the Bishop.]

This Lenten season, and its culmination at Easter, took on a real poignancy for me. I want to share with you this story of Easter and of celebrating what resurrection means in all its forms.

The day before Ash Wednesday, I was working in the office when the doorbell buzzed. I opened the door and greeted a quite distinguished-looking gentleman who asked me a very interesting question even

Christ has many faces, but none more **open**, more **accepting**, or more **beautiful** than the faces of the **Grace family**."

before he introduced himself. "Is that sign out front for real?" He was referring to the LGBT rainbow that is on our permanent church sign out front. After assuring him that this was indeed, quite real, and that we actively affirm and welcome the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community here at Grace, I invited him in and we talked for quite a bit.

This is Ed's story, and it is here with his permission and encouragement.

Forty-four years ago, Ed was completing his studies at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in preparation for answering a strong call to become a Lutheran pastor. As a gay man, however, he became increasingly aware that he was not welcome there. It was a terribly difficult time for him, especially when his roommate, also a gay man, was sent by the seminary for shock treatments in a barbaric attempt to "cure" him. After much struggle, prayer, and soul-searching, Ed decided that he could not stay, and on a day that will always be branded upon his memory, packed his car and drove away - not only from the seminary and from his dearly held call to be a pastor, but from the church he loved, as well. Years

of pain, bitterness, and resentment passed. Ed worshipped in the Episcopal church, convinced that he would never again be welcomed in the church of his heart. And then, on a visit to Houston to discern if he wanted to retire here, he passed our sign, and almost "drove off the road," to use his words. He couldn't believe, after a lifetime of agony and unanswered prayer, that the Spirit just might have led him to a Lutheran church which would accept him wholly and completely as he is. So he drove around the back and hit the buzzer. It was late on an "off" day for me, so I wouldn't normally have been here, but I see now that God placed me here that day for a reason.

Ed came to the Ash Wednesday service the next day, and found our small group of people to be truly welcoming. He talked to several members about his situation and found the reflection here of God's unconditional acceptance for the first time in forty-four years. Read Ed's own words from a letter he sent to the church:

The Christ has many faces, but none more open, more accepting, or more beautiful than the faces of the Grace family that I met at Ash Wednesday Eucharist. Forty-four years of anger, bitterness, and disappointment evaporated in one hour by participating in that communion with you and the others. What happened in 1963 at Concordia simply no longer signifies.

Based partly upon his experience here at Grace, Ed is making plans to move down here from Massachusetts some time over the summer. He has made friends with a man, an antiques dealer in the Heights, who is HIV positive, and plans on remaining close to Martin as he journeys through the course of his illness, no matter the end result. These men have been prayed for in Sunday morning worship services and at the healing service ever since this visit. In just a short time, Ed has forged roots in this community that he believes will carry him throughout the rest of his life. Our presence, and God's presence in us, has assured him that Houston, and Grace, are the places for him to be:

I shall be moving to Houston in 3 to 6 months. I will be a part of the Grace Church family - that's a given. I ask your prayers for Martin, who is HIV positive and so far has been denied medical care. I love him and wish I had the money to help him. I don't. Please share this with the people at Grace Church.

I talked to Ed on the phone today, and he has already been placed on the waiting list for a retirement community in the Heights. He has taken a leap of faith and given notice on his Massachusetts apartment for May 31st. In wonderful addition, he updated me on Martin's situation, and told me that

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Next **RIC Core Team Leadership Trainings**

- **October 18-21, 2007**
Christ Lutheran Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico
- **Nov. 2 & 3, 2007**
Advanced I-Wheel Training
St. Paul, Minnesota
- **Nov. 15-18, 2007**
New York, New York.
- **March 6-9, 2008**
Portland, Oregon
- **April 3-6, 2008**
Lubbock, Texas
- **TBA**
Columbus, Ohio

To register contact:
Jerry Vagts, grassroots@lca.org,
651-665-0861

The Synod Assemblies

On the Roads to...

Dramatic things can happen on the roads to... There's the disciples' encounter on the road to Emmaus, and later Paul's on the road to Damascus. Here we are on the road to

Chicago and the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in August, and dramatic things have happened.

First, there was the unanticipated decision and report of the Disciplinary Hearing Committee (DHC) in the trial of Pastor Bradley Schmeling early in the year – a report that recommended, and therefore can be said to have set in motion, Bradley's appeal of the DHC's decision to remove him from the clergy roster on August 15th, and the concurrent

The total represents more than **40%** of the **baptized membership** of the ELCA.

effort to get the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to direct the removal of the language in ELCA policy that precludes the service of LGBT ministers in a committed, same-gender relationship.

That concurrent effort took a road through the synod assemblies held in April-June of this year. This is the most democratic form of action in the ELCA, and the results are highly encouraging.

Three memorials were proposed for consideration in many of the synod assemblies held this year. They are a stair-step approach to addressing the rostering of LGBT persons in a committed, same-gender relationship, and similar seminarians as candidates for the roster.

Memorial 1 would direct the appropriate ELCA bodies to remove the language from the two

documents that prevent the rostered service of LGBT persons in a committed, same-gender relationship. Those two documents are *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*. If passed by the Churchwide Assembly, there would be but a single set of requirements, a single set of rules, a single vision for the exemplary life required of those in rostered service – not two, as there are now.

That memorial has been passed to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly by 21 synods. Including an additional synod that already passed a similar memorial in 2006 for the 2007 Assembly, the total represents more than 40% of the baptized membership of the ELCA. That is extraordinary and very encouraging.

Memorial 2 is the second in the stair-step approach to the Churchwide Assembly. If Memorial 1 does not pass at the 2007 Assembly, the plan is then to present this memorial. Since the Churchwide Assembly would not have removed the discriminatory language, the memorial encourages bishops to refrain from disciplining those who in good conscience call, ordain, commission, or consecrate LGBT persons in a same-gender relationship, where such relationship is the only barrier to being rostered. Fourteen synods have passed this memorial.

Memorial 3 is the third stair in the approach to the Churchwide Assembly. If neither Memorial 1 nor 2 passes at the Assembly, this memorial would come to the floor. It asks the Churchwide Assembly, since it would have neither removed the discriminatory language nor encouraged bishops to refrain from discipline, to at least encourage restraint in the application of the policy against the rostered service of LGBT persons in a committed, same-gender relationship. This memorial has been passed by 7 synods.

Obviously, if Memorial 1 passes at 2007 Churchwide, Memorials 2 and 3 would be moot and would not be presented.

Just so we know what else is travelling the road to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in Chicago on the other side of this issue, 14 synods have memorialized 2007 Churchwide asking for the continuation of the ELCA's discriminatory policy against rostering persons in a same-gender relationship.

Three synods have memorialized 2007 Churchwide asking it to explicitly prohibit the blessing of same-gender relationships, which would negatively revise the decisions at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

In sum, dramatic events have taken place in the year thus far. There will doubtless be other important developments prior to Churchwide Assembly, and the decisions at the Assembly could potentially impact the lives of all LGBT people in the

continued on page 16

We Need Your Help!

Come to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly

August 5–11, 2007
Chicago Navy Pier

Be involved in the life of your church
Important votes coming

Witness

Stand with Pr. Bradley Schmeling and St. John's
Stand with the ECP Roster of Pastors
Stand for ELCA LGBT Pastors
Support full participation

Volunteer (many needed)

Details and sign-up at www.goodsoil.org



ELCIC BIENNIAL NATIONAL CONVENTION PHOTOS



Delegates gather for the opening



Bishop Ray Schultz opens the 2007 National Convention



The business of the convention begins



Musicians Lori Nelson, Michele Barr, Mark Sedio (Music Director for the convention) and Owen Clark



Sister Anne Keffer speaks to the convention about diaconal ministry



Youth Assembly presentation on camp gathering for next year

ELCIC BIENNIAL NATIONAL CONVENTION PHOTOS



Delegates standing at microphones during the debate on Resolution 22 debate concerning mission ministry by synods to LGBT couples



Discussion during a break regarding Resolution 22



Bishop-elect Susan Johnson and her "honor guard," the Youth Assembly



Bishop Schultz preached on Luke 8:26-31; 35-39



Closing worship on Sunday



A New National Bishop Elected of ELCIC

By Pr. Klaus Ohlhoff

The election of a new National Bishop for the ELCIC was an agonizing process, taking three full days, and the maximum of six ballots. The feelings experienced by delegates and visitors ran the gamut from extreme disbelief to overwhelming joy (when the Rev. Susan Johnson was elected on the last ballot). For those of us there it was like watching Jacob wrestling with the angel of God.

The numbers of votes for each candidate will be given toward the end of this article – for now, let me focus on the feeling of this election. Sometime during the three days a dear friend of mine in

*We are **moving ahead** — the “Party of the Future” is alive and well, with much work yet to do.*

Winnipeg – a firm believer in “the rainbow Jesus,” shared with me a dream she had about her former boyfriend, with whom she had traveled in an old VW van, through the USA and Mexico, some years back. She dreamed that she was in the van again, and it was headed towards the edge of a cliff, where

it stopped on the brink of disaster, the front half suspended over the abyss (Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote-style), and the back half still on the ground, but just barely.

This is how it was with the election of the new Canadian bishop – our church was teetering precariously, with the “Party of the Past” (to use Emerson’s term) in the front of the bus, and “Party of the Future” (that’d be us!) in the back. The delegates were pretty well equally divided on what sort of the bishop they wanted – conservative or progressive, and so the names of nominees (and the subsequent votes for each) reflected that division.

In the front of the bus were the conservative

nominees – names like Bishop Ron Mayan (Alberta Synod), Bishop Steve Kristenson (previous bishop of Alberta), and a relatively unknown pastor named Ed Skutshek – the president of the lobby group called “Solid Ground,” known to be opposed to the blessing of same-gender relationships and the ordination of LGBT clergy. In the back of the bus we had the more progressive nominees, Bishop Cindy Halmarson (Saskatchewan Synod), Bishop Mike Pryse (Eastern Synod), and Rev. Susan Johnson (assistant to the bishop in Eastern Synod). Three conservatives and their supporters in the front, creating weight that threatened to take LGBT hopes over the cliff, and three progressive nominees and supporters in the back as a counterbalance – the ultimate outcome yet to be decided, creating tension.

Some of the highlights of the six ballots: seeing Susan Johnson in the front position after the first ballot (Thursday evening) gave her 75 votes out of 376 votes cast. (But wondering who Ed Skutshek was, who had placed third with 36 votes.) The second ballot (later Thursday evening) showed reason for increased concern, as this relatively unknown pastor from British Columbia almost doubled his following, receiving 66 votes to Susan’s 112. Meanwhile, Bishop Cindy Halmarson was still doing well with 61 votes, and we saw that the progressive and pro-woman vote was being divided between the two candidates.

The division increased in the third ballot (Friday morning) to 143 for Susan, 79 for Cindy, and 112 for Ed Skutshek,

After the third ballot, the top five nominees were offered the opportunity to address the convention for five minutes. Bishop Cindy took a middle road on the issue of local option for same-gender blessings, instead focusing on “the deep cracks within” our denomination. Susan Johnson said that she wanted to be part of church that was “in Mission for Others” by being generous, passionate, and loving in its dealings. Bishop Ron from Alberta declined the opportunity to speak, and then Bishop Mike Pryse delivered a forceful declaration on full inclusion for all – “I’ve come to believe in a church where gays and lesbians have full rights, including marriage and ordination, but that doesn’t mean forcing this on all... I believe in a church that isn’t ashamed of its internal diversity... a church that we can be proud to describe to our neighbours, and invite them to.” Finally, Pastor Ed Skutshek spoke. Unlike the others, he hadn’t provided a biography for the convention, though he had been asked to do so. In his remarks, he said it was not the role of the bishop to set forth a vision for the synod, but to be the pastor to it. He said that we had to face up to the Scriptural truth concerning the contentious issues before the ELCIC, and engage in dialog about the “pink elephant” in the room that was causing the

Bishop-elect Johnson is congratulated by LC/NA Executive Director, Emily Eastwood.



division. [The full text of the 5-minute speeches can be found in “ELCIC National Convention 2007 After Words” posted on both www.lcna.org and www.lutherans-concerned.ca.]

After the fourth ballot the names were reduced to three, (Bishop Cindy, Susan and Ed) and those three were each asked to answer the same 4 questions before the convention.

The fifth ballot results placed Ed Skutshek in the lead with 160 votes, 152 for Susan, and 71 for Cindy.

All delegates held their breath when the

final results were announced late on Friday night. The final tally was Susan, 206 votes, and Ed Skutshek, 172 votes. (378 votes cast, 190 needed to elect.) In the words of the Convention minutes, “Rev. Susan Johnson was declared elected as the new National Bishop of the ELCIC.”

Fast forward to Saturday night, and the Lutherans Concerned party in “Wise Guys” pub. A hundred ecstatic supporters of full inclusion for the LGBT members of our church gathered – supporters from every Synod and age – group, both lay and ordained. Thunder, lightning, wind and

rain (one of those typical summer storms) did not dampen our enthusiasm as we gathered under cover outdoors on the deck – celebratory drinks in hand! In the election of National Bishop, Susan Johnson brings with her an exemplary career as Assistant to the Bishop in the Eastern Synod since 1994, member of the LWF Council, and North American Regional Committee for LWF.

We are moving ahead – the “Party of the Future” is alive and well, with much work yet to do. Thanks be to God! ▼

Meet in Manitoba

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the participants were drawn to water as a life-giving essential, a potentially dangerous force, and a metaphor for Christianity, Christ, and the life of grace in Christ.

Dr. Sallie McFague, Distinguished Theologian in Residence, Vancouver School of Theology, spoke on “Global Warming: A Theological Problem,” an exposition of why the state of the planetary environment is not only a matter that churches, Christians, can legitimately play an active and activist role, but more importantly is a subject they are required to engage with as an integral part of their responsibilities as followers of Christ. As she said, “Sin is the refusal to share.” Christians are required to care for one another, both body and spirit. She said that we must change how we interact with and use the resource of this planet. To do that, she observed, “At the heart of any change lies an anthropology” - that is, a complete understanding of who we are, how we got to where we are, and where we are. She exhorted the assembled, telling them that actions regarding energy and environment are indicative of our relationship, or lack thereof, with God.

At the end of the day, the two denominations separated to conduct business pertinent to their own community of faith.

There were ultimately 394 voting members attending the ELCIC convention: 223 lay delegates, 171 rostered persons (clergy and diaconal ministers). Additionally, there were 161 visitors, for a total attendance of 555.

Many things came before the ELCIC meeting, all related to the theme chosen for

this year’s convention, “In Mission for Others.” The Youth Assembly was granted voice and vote at this and future conventions, ordained ministers of churches in full communion serving in the ELCIC were granted the same rights and privileges as their ELCIC peers, the National Church Council will consider a procedure whereby delegates to future conventions can be fully funded on a per capita basis rather than the current full funding by their congregations regardless of size. The ELCIC committed itself to answer the call to respect the integrity of God’s creation through environmental

Both denominations elected bishops who are considered progressive.

stewardship. The convention heard from Kathy Magnus of the Lutheran World Federation and about the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Women, as well as the Diaconal Ministers across North America. New or returning members were elected to the National Church Council, the Court of Adjudication and ELCIC Services Group. Don Storch was elected to another term as Secretary of the National Church.

The chair, Bishop Schultz, ruled that he had made an error in 2005 when he allowed the convention to establish a two-thirds majority vote requirement for passage of any motion having to do with same-gender blessings or ordination. He said that allowing the imposition of such a special rule as the standing rule of order undercut the very basis of democracy, and therefore, the rule for the convention was Bourinot’s Rules of Order, requiring 50 percent plus one for passage of motions

not specified by Bourinot’s as requiring something higher. That did not mean that such a motion for a special rule could not be made, but, if made, would itself require a two-thirds majority.

Therefore, all motions coming before the convention requiring a two-thirds majority for passage relating to the same-gender blessings motion were ruled out of order, defeated, or, following the recommendation of Reference and Counsel, had no action taken on them.

In the end, both denominations elected persons thought to be progressive as bishops heading their denomination,

Bishop Susan Johnson in the ELCIC and Bishop Fred Hiltz of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Both denominations in their separate assemblies debated vigorously the subject of blessing same-gender, committed relationships. Both gatherings defeated motions that could have put the denominations on paths that might have led to such blessings, the ELCIC by 19 votes (181 for, 200 against) and the Anglicans, having passed their motion among the laity and the clergy, failing in the House of Bishops by 2 votes (19 for, 21 against) - all three Houses being necessary for passage.

Heartened that good leadership is in place in the ELCIC itself, energized and re-dedicated to grassroots efforts to educate on the subject of equality and full inclusion, uplifted and inspired that, within

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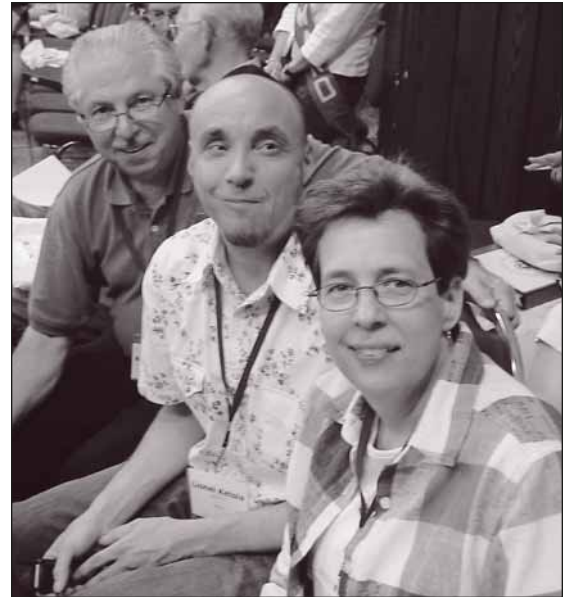
Faithful Witness:

Lutherans Concerned In Canada at the ELCIC National Convention **By Lionel Ketola**

What could possibly bring members of Lutherans Concerned in Canada, their friends and supporters, and LC/NA staff and executive all together in June in

Winnipeg! – home of the mosquito? This June 21–24, 2007, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada (ELCIC) gathered for their national convention. And members of LCIC (LCIC) were there – joined by friends and supporters – to witness to their hopes for a church capable of deeper expressions of Gospel rooted in love, justice and full inclusion.

LCIC has been preparing for the national convention in a number of ways. With the help of Rebecca Taylor, a talented web designer and member of Advent Lutheran Church, Toronto, LCIC now



Walter Rothenburger, Lionel Ketola and Emily Eastwood at work during the Convention.

Delegates were given an **opportunity** to consider the **church's mission** as a more **elastic** and responsive reality that takes on diverse shapes.

celebrates a lovely web presence at www.lutheransconcerned.ca.

LCIC began the new year by placing a series of ads in the Canada Lutheran and in the Eastern Synod Lutheran. These were intended to draw attention to the new LCIC website offering news, educational resources, RIC information and a variety of helpful links. The website's Educational

Resources page includes essays and resources related to same-gender marriage, ministry of all the baptized, and inclusive worship resources. With this new online presence, LCIC's hope is that the resource would become a friendly place to explore many issues related to the lives and concerns of LGBTQ people, especially for ELCIC convention delegates seeking thoughtful resources for study and reflection.

LCIC members and supporters were present throughout the convention offering support for delegates struggling with how to vote in response to National Church Council's motion which would empower synods to devise regional mission strategies appropriate to their synodical contexts, including the blessing of same-gender unions.

That motion stated:

This convention affirms that the diversity within Canada's culture requires responses to a variety of persons in order for this church to be **In Mission for Others**. We also affirm that the synods have the mandate to devise mission strategies appropriate to their regional settings. Accordingly, we encourage synods to develop ways to best minister to people who live in committed same sex relationships, including the possibility of blessing such unions.

While viewed by many in the LGBTQ community as a half measure, offering same-gender couples mere blessings despite civil marriage having been legal in Canada since 2005, the motion was welcomed as a way of framing the blessing of same-gender relationships in the broader context of mission. Framed in such a way, delegates were given an opportunity to consider the church's mission as a more elastic and responsive reality that takes on diverse shapes in diverse contexts. For members of

Lutherans Concerned in Canada
SOCIETY FOR DIVERSITY AWARENESS

Annual General Meeting
Saturday, July 28, 2007

3 p.m. – 5 p.m. EST

Via Teleconference

Welcome members of LC in Canada and LC/NA

Participate in our next year • Hear our fruits of last year
Attend this event • Contact us at our website

www.lutheransconcerned.ca

SUPPORT • EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES • HOPE

LCIC, this NCC motion was an exciting opportunity for opening the door to synods as they dared to dream the impossible, to 'draw the circle wide' through courageous mission initiatives.

However, despite NCC's attempt to shift the discussion to 'mission,' comments by delegates speaking against the motion during floor debate focused mainly on homosexuality itself and their belief in its inherent 'sinfulness.' The broader message of mission seemed lost and it seems that much more work is needed to be done in order for our church to fully embody this kind of witness.

Significantly, despite the defeat of the synodical option motion for same-gender blessings (the motion failed with 181 voting for the motion and 200 against), these results were very encouraging as they reveal a continued movement towards the simple majority needed for approval. Whereas the 2005 motion was defeated by a 37 vote margin (183 yes, 220 no, 5 abstentions), the 2007 motion was defeated with a smaller 19 vote margin.

For members of LCIC, this trend is hopeful, and speaks of work that needs to be done. Forty years in the desert may feel like a long time, but as we struggle and work to foster change in the church that we love, we do so guided by a promise of better things to come.

Another highlight of the convention was the election of the Rev. Susan Johnson to the office of national bishop. Bishop-elect Susan brings a wealth of national and international experience and a great love for her church. And in another powerful moment during the election process, Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryse made a powerful witness through his own prophetic election speech exhorting delegates that it was 'high time' for the ordination of openly gay and lesbian pastors and same-gender marriage in our ELCIC.

A renewed sense of hope filled the air on the last Saturday night of the convention as LCIC members and supporters gathered for an LCIC Hospitality Night at Wise Guys Bar and Grill on the University of Manitoba Campus. The event was very well attended, drawing well over 100 supportive delegates and visitors for a celebratory night. LCIC leaders Lorre Calder (KW chapter convenor), Walter Rothenburger (LC/Toronto chapter convenor) and Lionel Ketola (LCIC board) gave thanks for the faithful witness of so many LCIC members and supporters during the convention, and also gave thanks for the hard work and great witness of Emily Eastwood, LC/NA Executive Director, and Phil Soucy, LC/NA Communications Director. The joyful gathering energized us for our future work as we gave thanks for our shared witness and even dared to begin dreaming new dreams together!

From this point onward, our faithful witness will continue in many exciting directions. With a

strengthened national network emerging out of this convention, LCIC will deepen its ongoing work of grassroots organizing and education as it anticipates future opportunities at synodical and national levels.

LCIC deeply values the ongoing work and commitment of our members and supporters! If you would be interested in supporting our ongoing work please contact us by visiting our website at www.lutheransconcerned.ca and let us know how you would see yourself furthering our vital ministry of full inclusion in our church! ▼

A Resurrection Story

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he has been notified that he will be receiving free health care for his HIV starting very soon. We will continue to pray for Ed and Martin, but we can celebrate already, with all the Saints of Heaven, that prayers for them have been and continue to be answered.

So now you have the story to go with the unknown names you have been holding in your hearts all these weeks. Bless you for doing so. We are making a difference here on the corner of Waugh and Missouri. We, this tiny household of faith, are making great strides in the name of the risen Christ, and for that we can be truly and forever grateful. When times are tough for us, we can remind ourselves that despite the fears and the frustrations, and the obstacles, we *are* changing the world – one life at a time. To God be the glory, forever and ever. Amen. ▼

Save the Dates

Lutherans Concerned/North America Biennial Assembly & North American RIC Conference

San Francisco State University
July 3–6, 2008

Keynote Speaker: Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson

Come For Pride the week before,
Stay For Hearts on Fire

More details, a website, coming...
Stay tuned...



LC/NA Board has Chicago Cultural Awareness Experience

By **Jim Tyler**, Co-Director, LC/NA
Multicultural Relations Committee

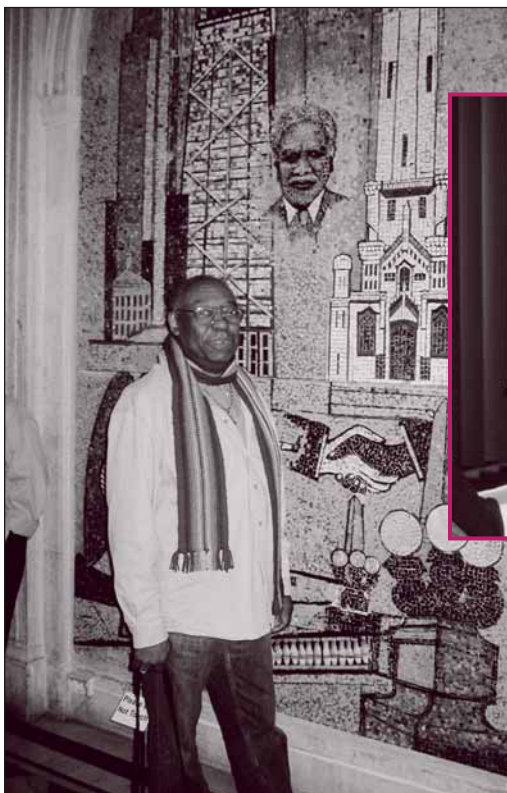
At the leadership retreat last September, the LC/NA Board of Directors decided that the Multicultural Relations Committee would be in charge of a cultural awareness experience at the Board meeting in Chicago in March 2007. So, where to begin! I really had no contacts in Chicago. I knew there was a wealth of history around the African

Their passionate talk sparked off each other and interlaced each other's sentences like a fine woven fabric.

American culture going back to one of the city founders being of African descent. Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, who established the first permanent settlement in 1779, was of African and Haitian parentage. I wanted the experience of African American culture in Chicago to encompass a spectrum of historical background and current

situation involving the church in its relationship to LGBTQ people of color. A

Below: Jim Tyler standing beside a mosaic honoring Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. Right: the Rev. Gwendolyn E. Miller.



large assignment to cover in an allocated time slot of about four hours!

Early in October I was encouraged to contact the Dean of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. My call and email elicited no response.

So on I went on my own to set up what I thought would be a good exposure to and an involvement with the African American community. I settled on the DuSable Museum of African American History as a centerpiece for the afternoon. We would have a tour and time for discussion afterwards. I learned of a restaurant that had served the community for more than sixty-five years where we could all share some soul food after having had our souls fed earlier. But who would lead us in that banquet for the mind and spirit?

It was not until February that someone in Chicago said the person I wanted was Pastor Booker Vance, Dean of the Metropolitan Synod. I had an "Ah Ha Moment." So I called again and my call was returned. We had a good conversation in which we both understood exactly what was needed and how to proceed.

The afternoon was overcast and looked more like early winter than early spring. The Du Sable Museum, founded in 1957 by Dr. Margaret T. and Charles Burroughs, is located in a park setting as part of Hyde Park community. The trees and rolling grass would be a beautiful sight after springtime. That day it reminded me of a foggy day in London town. The foyer of the museum contains two mosaic murals, one of which includes a bust of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable.

Before our tour, I had the pleasure to meet Pastor Booker Vance who had brought a most welcome guest, Rev. Gwendolyn E. Miller.

Our tour guide was most knowledgeable and very dynamic in his presentation of background information. A special exhibit on the tour was the Long Walk To Freedom, featuring the late Mrs. Rosa Parks. When our guide left we had some time on our own to select what we would visit. We left the galleries with a sense of having journeyed a great distance.

Pastors Vance and Miller awaited us in a separate gallery for discussion and questions. They introduced us to the rich and demanding programs in which they are engaged. This information included issues of people of color within the African American Lutheran Association as well as within the ELCA and the community at large.

Their passionate talk sparked off each other and interlaced each other's sentences like a fine woven fabric. It was fun to see and hear. They held rapt attention from all and drew us into their conversation. Comments and questions were raised and answered in a wonderfully informative manner. I reluctantly had to call time in order that we would

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Dawn Roginski Ordained in San Francisco

Called as **Pastor of Parish Programs** as
St. Francis Lutheran Church

On June 16–17, 2007, Dawn Roginski became Pastor Dawn Roginski at a liturgy held at St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco. Bishop Paul Egertson (retired) and Pastor Dan Solberg, Dean of the San Francisco Conference, conducted the rite of ordination; Pastor Ruth Frost celebrated the Eucharist service during which Pastor Donna Simon preached.

*Our congregation is **growing** into its **vision**...and Dawn is growing into **her work**.*

Called by St. Francis to be pastor of parish programs, Dawn's responsibilities include managing the extensive complex of outreach ministries at St. Francis, as well as developing a diaconate program – a new initiative for St. Francis. Prior to her call to St. Francis, Dawn served for three years as the chaplain for the Marillac Center for Children in Kansas City, Missouri.

Of her call and new ministry, Pastor Dawn said, "I have experience with building a program from my time as chaplain at the Marillac Center, but this is an opportunity to develop new skills. St. Francis is a church that is active in the community and cares about the community. I like that, and I like their genuine excitement at trying new ways to serve."

A 2002 Master of Divinity graduate of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., Dawn, as an openly gay

candidate, was not eligible for ordination by the ELCA. She applied to and was approved for ordination by the Extraordinary Candidacy Project (ECP)(www.ecp.org). The ECP credentials candidates for ordination using the same standards as the ELCA, except that being openly gay is not a disqualifier. The ECP is not associated with the ELCA in any way.

Interviewed by Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries (LLGM)(www.llgm.org) prior to Dawn's ordination, Dale Leininger, chairperson of the St. Francis call committee said, "Our congregation is growing into its vision for our future and Dawn is growing into her work as a parish minister. Dawn brings a wide range of experience to St. Francis and will be an asset to our programs."

Dawn is the third ECP candidate to be ordained extra ordinem in the last 12 months. Pastor Erik Christensen, called by St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square in Chicago, and Pastor Megan Rohrer, called by Christ Church, Her Church (Ebenezer), St. Francis and Sts. Mary and Martha Lutheran Churches in San Francisco, were ordained in the second half of 2006.

Dawn joins the staff of St. Francis, which is headed by Rev. Dr. Robert Goldstein, lead pastor of this urban parish located near the Castro district of San Francisco. He said of Dawn when interviewed by LLGM, "Dawn brings a broad range of experience in working with persons of all ages. We look forward to her ministry with us and the community."

Prior to seminary, Dawn earned a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology in 1996 from St. Mary's University in Minnesota, following her 1988 graduation from the University of Minnesota. Dawn and her dog have moved from Lenexa, Kansas to her new home in San Francisco to take up her ministry.

Saint Francis Lutheran Church is located at 152 Church Street in San Francisco, California (www.st-francis-lutheran.org). ▼

Cultural Awareness

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have time for devotions before leaving for dinner. Pastors Miller and Vance led us in a most fitting closure to an inspired and uplifting experience.

Our family-style meal at Army and Lou's was a fitting way to bring our evening to a close. Yet the experience continued on Sunday as we worshipped at St. Stephens Lutheran Church where Pastor Vance serves. Our treat on Sunday was brunch at another soul food restaurant with more cuisine of the African American culture.

It seems we had a consensus that this was a most wonderful awareness experience in the African American culture. ▼

NEWS BRIEFS

Anglican Church Conformity Trumps Laity, Clergy and Gospel in Canada

As the Triennial General Synod of the Anglican Church in Canada came to a close on June 24, the bishops of the denomination vetoed an action that was taken both in the clergy assembly and in the laity assembly by substantial margins. The action would have allowed same-sex blessings in individual parish churches with the concurrence of the local bishop and “in a manner which respects the conscience of the incumbent [parish priest] and the will of the parish.”

The laity vote was 79–59 in favor, the clergy vote was 63–53 in favor, but the bishops’ vote was 19–21 against. The reasoning of the bishops, according to one bishop who was interviewed by a Canadian newspaper, was that a yes-vote would have violated the oath Anglican priests take in ordination to remain in communion with “the Church of England throughout the world.”

This issue is the same as the Episcopal Church USA is facing, a demand from the Anglican Communion representing most of the Anglican (Episcopal) church groups in the world that participating churches conform to a ban on same-sex blessings and on gay or lesbian partnered clergy ordinations and on gay or lesbian ordinations into the office of bishop. This ban follows a series of meetings reacting to the ordination of Bishop Gene Robinson.

Once again, an overarching obsession with ecclesiological uniformity has trumped a growing genuine affirmation of gay and lesbian persons and their relationships and the validity of their calls to ministry and participation in the ministry of the church.

The action taken by the clergy and laity

said, in part, that: “members of the Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod in Winnipeg agreed that the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the church’s core doctrine, in the sense of being creedal.” In Anglican parlance, this would tend to mean that the synod found no scriptural or doctrinal prohibition or specificity to issues of sexual orientation and service in Christ’s church. Hence, the action of the bishops, assuming that a majority of them may have agreed on the sense of the clergy/laity motion, caved to the pressure of the world Communion of Anglicans to maintain organic conformity.

Careful attention to these kinds of ecclesial maneuverings is essential as we in LC/NA and **goodsoil** go into the August Biennial Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, because pleas for church unity are already multiplying as the “reason” for blocking or postponing any actions related to *Vision and Expectations* or the disciplinary documents of the ELCA as they pertain to partnered gay and lesbian persons in rostered ministry, and therefore full inclusion.

Intimidation in Latvia

Those of you who were at Toronto for Assembly last year remember the moving story related by Pastor Maris Sants concerning the physical attack against participants in last year’s PRIDE event in Latvia, including the throwing of rotten vegetables and excrement. Maris returned to Latvia after being with us in Toronto and has helped organize the upcoming PRIDE for this year. During this time, he and his partner have been subjected to drive-by taunts from speeding autos. So far, no direct violence has happened, but Maris and Andis live with this situation everyday.

The International Program Committee

of LC/NA will be tracking events and assisting with two different legal appeals that Maris is pursuing. Meanwhile, we would ask that readers place Maris, Andis, and the LGBT community in Latvia on their personal prayer lists and on the prayer lists of their congregations.

—Philip Moeller,
Director, IPC, LC/NA ▼

Synod Assemblies

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ELCA, which would have long-range impact on LC/NA’s mission as well.

But, whatever the outcome in August, whatever changes do or do not take place, the unchangeable truth is that God’s love and the message of the Gospel are eternal. That means that our efforts will not stop until the policy and practice of this church become one with that love and that message. ▼

Meet in Manitoba

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our differences and disagreements in the ELCIC, we came together as the Body of Christ in worship, songs of praise, and communion. LGBT Lutherans, their families, friends and allies continue God’s work for justice. ▼

“In Honor of...”

In Honor of...

Wayne Morris

Jeff Ramm & Neal Hauschild

Dale Truscott & Kin Xuxa

In honor of the Blessing Service for Jeff Ramm & Neal Hauschild

In recognition of the work of Dale Truscott and Kin Xuxa

Honored by...

Doyle & Luciene Morris

37 family members and friends

The Jennifer M. Lee and Jeffrey S. Chapski Family Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund