

INSIDE

From the Editor 2

Hearts on Fire Pages 3–10

From the Co-Chair 11

RIC Pages 12–13

Extraordinary Ordination 14

From Missouri to the
Emerald City 16

New Forum Announced 18

Advanced I-Wheel®
Training Event 19

Hearts on Fire Schedule 20

To register for
Hearts on Fire, go to
www.lcna.org/assembly

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.

We Invite You We Encourage You: Come to Hearts on Fire

By **Emily Eastwood**, Executive Director, LC/NA

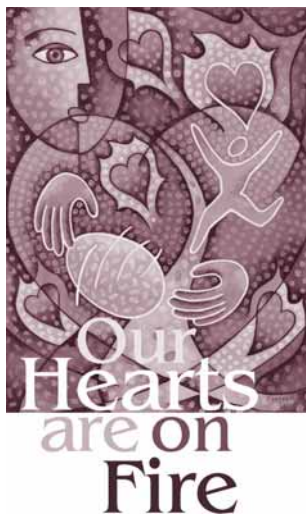
With a bit of luck, speedy service from the U.S. and Canadian Postal Services, and, failing that, the intervention of the Holy Spirit, this issue of *Concord* should reach you during Easter season when we are still basking in the

light of Christ, enjoying the fragrance of lilies, dutifully eating the last of those soft sugary very pink bunnies, and delighting in the refrain of Alleluias. The text for Easter 3 is Luke 24:13–35, the story of two disciples on the road to Emmaus and their surprise encounter with the risen Christ.

You know how I love a good story. The road to Emmaus has all the elements of a great one; including tragedy and intrigue, a story within a story moving almost to comedy, then revelation, reversal and happy ending. The simple words carry powerful themes: on the road, standing still in sadness, listening deeply, telling our stories, hearts burning (in a good way, of course), breaking bread, eyes opened wide, hope renewed, on the road again with joy and purpose to share good news of the one who is risen indeed.

With this issue of *Concord* we invite you, whoever you are, to enter into this powerful story anew by attending Hearts on Fire, July 3–6, 2008 in San Francisco, California.

At Hearts on Fire, we'll be on the road with the disciples in so many ways. Many of us will be traveling to San Francisco, carrying with us our news, our stories, our joys and sorrows. By then, a new sanctuaried web forum will have been launched for our members from the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, allowing these members to build a safe virtual community. We hope folks from both synods come to Hearts on Fire to



build that community in person. In the months ahead of Hearts on Fire, look for big news coming from a progressive corner of the ELCIC. The first draft of the ELCA Social Statement on Sexuality will have gone public just before Easter. By July synod assemblies in the ELCA and the ELCIC will be complete; voting members for the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly elected in all synods. Hearings on the first draft of the social statement will already be underway. Ready or not, the 13-month walk/run/roll to CWA09 will be in motion.

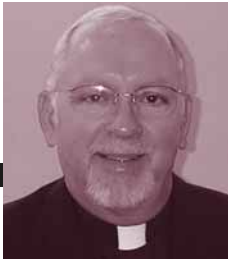
No matter your Lutheran denomination, these are exciting times, *kairos* times, opportune times. The winds of the Spirit are blowing and what we do, what we say, what we give of ourselves in the next year and a half can make a profound difference, maybe *the* difference, not just in the ELCA in 2009, but far beyond.

Come to Hearts on Fire to be renewed, to reconcile, to find again the presence of Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Come to Hearts on Fire to tell your story in effective ways. Have your family picture made. Come to laugh, cry, dance-charged. Come to build relationships. Come to build an inclusive, anti-racist and truly reconciling faith community. Come to strengthen the movement to create the change we seek. Just come. ▼

Hearts on Fire information continues on page 3

The Editor

DALE TRUSCOTT



Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road? —Luke 24:32 NRSV

The biennial assembly of Lutherans Concerned/North America and Reconciling in Christ Conference this summer has for its theme “Hearts

on Fire.” This issue of *Concord* is full of information and invitation. Get yourselves to San Francisco July 3–6 and experience your hearts burning within you because Jesus of Nazareth will be walking that road with you.

Threaded through this issue you will find verse quotes from Luke 24, the road to Emmaus story. It is one of my favorites. I actually wrote a scholarly essay about it for publication some years ago, but was unsuccessful in finding a journal. I believe that the story may be an early Christian catechetical story told to neophyte Christians during their period of education and training leading to baptism, probably at the Easter vigil. The story parallels the Christian worship liturgy so clearly that it cannot have been a coincidence. The conversation of the disciples with the risen Jesus, whom they don’t recognize yet, along the road, parallels the liturgy of the word, the synagogue rite experienced by early Christians as they continued to worship in the synagogues. The supper in Emmaus where Jesus, quite surprisingly, takes a place at the head of the table even though he is the invited stranger, is clearly a Eucharistic meal with Jesus breaking the bread and distributing it to the disciples. In

the breaking of bread they recognize the savior.

Just so, we continue to gather in worship, as we will at Hearts on Fire, to receive the broken bread distributed, as it were, by Jesus of Nazareth, risen in our hearts of faith and present with us at the table and in the lives that we live as we leave that table each week.

Lutherans are finally extracting themselves from the medieval theologies that make the Eucharist a medicine of immortality, a “dose of Jesus” to cure a person of their sin. It is so much more than that, indeed if it ever was that in the beginning. A key word in the traditional order of prayer at the table is, in Greek, *anamnesis*. The simple translation is “remembrance.” But it is oh so much more profound than that! This is a remembrance come alive, a person and event in the past that happens again and again in our Eucharists. And, again, Eucharist is not only a reenactment of the last supper. It is table-fellowship with Jesus like it was at all of the meals he shared with his followers. “They recognized him in the breaking of bread.”

So did Cleopas and his companion simply say to themselves, “Gee, what a wonderful worship experience that was! Let’s go home and

savor it, put it in our memory book, and watch Sunday afternoon TV?” No! They went back to Jerusalem and spread the news around as the truth of the resurrection was beginning to dawn on the Twelve.

When I started going to Lutherans Concerned assemblies in 1990, they were gatherings of the weary, the closeted, the rejected, and the lonely. And we savored the moments we had together and wept during the Saturday healing service because so many were dying of AIDS. Now our assemblies are Eucharistic empowerment sessions, still with the healing rite. We are strengthened by one another and by leaders, speakers and workshops, and we are sent just as Cleopas and friend were sent from Emmaus. Lutherans Concerned members and Reconciling in Christ congregations are at the forefront of a gospel movement in Christendom to restore the open and inclusive welcome of the Gospel to the radical dimension it was when Jesus started it. And we will succeed, not to everyone’s delight, I’m sorry to say, but we *will* succeed.

Think of LC/NA’s mission not so much as a small contingent knocking on the door of big, successful, functioning institution begging them to let us in. Think of LC/NA’s ministry as striding down the road to Emmaus being taught by Jesus along the way and beckoning over our shoulders to the Lutheran denominational churches, “Hey, hurry up and join us. Come. Catch up with the Gospel. Jesus is telling us everything we ever wanted to know about the scriptures and himself. Catch up ELCA, ELCIC, LCMS and all the rest. Catch up and experience Christ’s welcome.” ▼

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.

Publication Information

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Who should come to Hearts on Fire:

- If you are an advocate, an ally, a parent, a child, partnered or single...
- If you are un-churched, a C&E Christian, a lay leader, a minister, or a bishop...
- If you are from the LCMS, WELS, ELCIC, ELCA or another denomination...
- If you are queer, straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or none of the above...
- If you are male, female, transgender or prefer no label at all...
- If you support Hillary, Barak, John, Ralph, Peter, Paul or Mary...
- If you are a youngster, young at heart or somewhere in the middle...
- If you have the money, can organize it, or need assistance...
- If you are Asian, Hispanic, Native American, black, white or multi-racial...
- If you are able-bodied, disabled, or somewhere in between...
- If you are from the U.S., Canada or beyond...
- If you want to worship, to learn, to be renewed...
- If you are on a mission from God to create change or just need a safe space to be who God created you to be...

**You are invited to
Hearts on Fire!**

Speakers

The Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire

V. Gene Robinson was consecrated bishop on All Saints Sunday, November 2, 2003, and was invested as the ninth Bishop of New Hampshire on March 7, 2004. In 1973, he completed his M.Div. at the General Theological Seminary in New York, was ordained deacon, and then priest, serving as Curate at Christ Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey. From 1978 to 1985, Gene was Youth Ministries Coordinator for the seven dioceses of New England, serving two years on the National Youth Ministries Development Team, where he helped originate the national Episcopal Youth Event. From 1983 until his election as bishop, Gene also served as Executive Secretary of Province I, coordinating all cooperative programs between the seven dioceses of New England.

Co-author of three AIDS education curricula for youth and adults, Gene has done AIDS work in the United States, Uganda and South Africa. He has been an advocate for anti-racism training in the diocese



What are you **discussing** with each other while you walk along? —Luke 24:17

and wider Church. He helped build the Diocese of New Hampshire's close working partnership with the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, advocated for debt relief for the world's most impoverished nations, and lobbied for socially-responsible investment within and beyond the Church.

Gene enjoys entertaining and cooking, gardening, music and running. He is the father of two grown daughters and is the proud, new grandfather of little Morgan Isabella. He lives with his partner, Mark

Andrew, who is employed by the State of New Hampshire's Department of Safety.

The Rev. Kelly Fryer

Kelly Fryer (M.Div., M.Th.) is the executive director of ARE: A Renewal Enterprise. She is a teacher, author, and inspirational speaker with nearly twenty years of experience leading organizations into renewal. Kelly is also a member of the faculty at Spertus College in



Chicago, Illinois, where she teaches leadership and organization in the Nonprofit Management Graduate Program. Previously she served as Assistant Professor of Leadership at Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She is the author of several books including *No Experience Necessary: Everybody's Welcome* (Augsburg Fortress, 2005) and *Reclaiming The C Word: Daring To Be Church Again* (Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

After serving as a Lutheran pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for nearly two decades, Kelly resigned from the clergy roster in early 2006. In a letter written to the Conference of Bishops, she explained that seismic changes in her vocational and personal life over recent years, including the divorce that brought a formal end to her marriage, created space for her to understand her identity as a lesbian; something that she had never been able to see or admit before.

Fully committed to the cause of inclusivity within the church, Kelly's real passion continues to be keeping the church focused outward, in mission, doing justice and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others. In fact, in her newest book, *Reclaiming the E Word: Waking Up To Our Evangelical Identity*, to be published in early 2008, Kelly calls on mainstream and progressive Christians to share their message in word and deed with evangelical enthusiasm. "I believe the world today needs what we have," she says, "the promise of radical grace and a path toward reconciliation. It is our responsibility to do whatever it takes, in any way we can, to get the real good news out there and make a positive difference in the world." Kelly, along with the team at ARE: A Renewal Enterprise, is currently at work across the U.S. and Canada, helping to renew, refocus, and retool congregations and judicatories for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Kelly is a news junkie, lifelong Cubs fan, cartoonist, wannabe drummer, and blogger (you can visit her online at *Reclaiming the F Word* (<http://reclaimingtheword.typepad.com>) and find out which F Word she means). She lives in Chicago with her partner, Tana, who is also the co-founder and Creative Director of ARE. They share their home with Kelly's fifteen-year old son and their cat,

Blizzard. Their daughters, both college-age, hang out there a lot, too - especially around dinnertime.

The Rt. Reverend John Selders, Bishop of the Church of God

The Right Reverend John L. Selders, Jr. is an ordained minister serving in the United Church of Christ; the organizing pastor of Amistad United Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut; Program Coordinator of Zizzo House and Lead Principal for the Human



Connection Project. He is the loving spouse of Pamela and father of two, Alisia and Jay. John has done his academic and theological reflection attending Life Christian Bible College, Webster University and Eden Theological Seminary.

In the fall of 2004, he was consecrated to the office of bishop in the Church of God and set as President of a new religious body, The Inter-Denominational Conference of Liberation Congregations and Ministries, an interfaith, ecumenical fellowship of

Chaplains

The Rev. Barbara Lundblad

Barbara Lundblad earned her BA at Augustana College. She was the youth director in two Minnesota congregations before attending Yale Divinity School, where she received her M.Div. and was ordained in 1980. Lundblad served at Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church in Manhattan. Since



1997, Lundblad has served on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary as associate professor of preaching and has been one of the Lutheran preachers on The Protestant Hour radio program since 1983. She has taught preaching at Yale Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College and the Doctor of Ministry program in preaching at the Association of Chicago Theological Schools. She is the author of *Transforming the Stone: Preaching through Resistance to Change*. A long time friend of Lutherans Concerned, Barbara served as keynote speaker for Assembly '88 in Toronto and Assembly '94 in Charlotte, NC, as well as Bible Study Leader for Assembly '04 in the Twin Cities.

The Rev. Bradley Schmeling

Pr. Bradley Schmeling serves as the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Atlanta, Georgia. In January 2007, he was put on trial by the ELCA for being in a same gender relationship with Rev. Darin Easler. Although the Discipline Hearing Committee removed him from the roster, it



suggested that the policy was bad and should be changed. Their decision initiated an unprecedented attempt to change the policy, with memorials adopted by 21 synods. Although the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly did not change the policy, it did encourage bishops to act with restraint and to refrain from disciplining the church's LGBT pastors. Ordained in 1989, Schmeling graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio and served Calvary Lutheran Church, Columbus before moving to Atlanta to enter doctoral work at Emory University, Atlanta. He was called to St. John's in 2000.

Chaplain Lionel Ketola

Lionel Ketola is an approved candidate for ordained ministry with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM). Presently awaiting ordination, Lionel serves in long-term care chaplaincy and also coordinates a drop-in ministry for low-income adults in

Were not our **hearts burning** within us while he was... opening the **scriptures** to us?—Luke 24:32

radical inclusivity. He is a teacher, lecturer, workshop leader, an HIV/AIDS educator and activist with numerous citations for his work. He has been a speaker or presenter on issues of race and sexual orientation at many religious events and conferences. John tells his personal story in the video, *Bi-sex-u-al* that was produced by the United Church of Christ in 2003. He was a founding member of the Institute of Welcoming Resources, an interdenominational organization providing resources for LGBT-affirming communities of faith.

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore

Pastor Gladys G. Moore is currently serving as the Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Prior to her call at Mount Holyoke, Gladys was an Assistant to the Bishop in the New Jersey



Synod, ELCA, for 16 years and served St. Matthew's Lutheran in Jersey City and St. John's Lutheran in Newark, New Jersey during her time on synod staff.

She plays the guitar and has written numerous songs. She has also served as chaplain, preacher, retreat resource person, and Bible Study leader at several synodical, regional, national, and international events.

downtown Toronto. After publicly coming out in seminary, Lionel's candidacy with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was cancelled in 1988.



Following seminary graduation (M.Div.) in 1988, Lionel worked in the non-profit sector with a variety of non-profit housing and community mental health organizations, and eventually retrained as an arts therapist. Endorsed in 2004 by the Extraordinary Candidacy Project, Lionel was called in March 2006 to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Newmarket Ontario, making Holy Cross the first ELCIC congregation to call an openly queer-identified intern.

Lionel and his husband Steven were married in 2003 and make their home in a 60-year-old cottage in the Greater Toronto Area where they enjoy the beauty of the "near north" from canoes, campfires, and cross-country ski trails.



Worship

Each Assembly is framed in the context of worship. We start with a celebration of the God who binds us together, and we end with a festival of sending. In between, from each morning's beginning with Bible Study to the keynote presentations and workshops through to our evening worship, we are doing the work of the people. The worship experiences throughout the Assembly are designed to empower us for work, which extends well beyond the walls of

LGBT Ministerium Gathering

At Hearts on Fire, LC/NA will launch a Ministerium for LGBT clergy, ministers, seminarians, and would-be ministers from all rosters of the Lutheran communion. LGBT ministers, both lay and ordained, rostered and non-rostered, out, partially out, closeted, active, retired, resigned, or removed from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM), Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and independent Lutheran churches are invited to attend.

The idea for the LGBT Ministerium came from conversations among ELCA, ELCIC, ELM, rostered, unrostered, removed, retired, and resigned ministers who participated in the devotional booklet, *A Place Within My Walls*, and attended the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA07) last summer. Out of the historic introduction of 82 LGBT ministers to the ELCA came a wonderful and respectful dialogue between colleagues. Participants encouraged additional gatherings to continue the conversation.

Since CWA07, a number of ELCA pastors have been outed or have chosen to come out. In addition many LGBT seminarians and seminary interns are moving through candidacy processes, ELCA, ELM, and ELCIC. As we find our way through this chapter of the movement for full participation, it is critical that we provide places and times for mutual support and mentoring.

The ministerium gathering will be held as a pre-event to Hearts on Fire, on July 2-3 at San Francisco State, and is being planned by Pastors Anita Hill (ELM) and Brad Froslee (ELCA). The retreat-style gathering will include worship, large and small group conversations, and affinity group sessions. Probable topics of conversation include: building a network of support; finding a place: to worship, to serve, to be; preaching the liberating word; called to serve: for seminarians and those considering ministry; coming out to congregations; gender identity and expression in ministry; out, proud and serving – what's next.

Sanctuary and confidentiality will be integral to this ministerium.

"I look forward to the Hearts on Fire Ministerium gathering as a means of connecting, networking, and

befriending a wider circle of LGBT clergy and associates. In the 1980s, I was part of a lesbians-in-ministry network and hosted a gathering of lesbian seminarians. As a part of a Twin Cities ecumenical LGBT clergy group, I have had opportunities to hear and learn from colleagues across the denominational spectrum.

"Since 1983, I've attended ELCA assemblies (and assemblies of the predecessor church bodies) locally and at Churchwide, where I have been blessed to have many 'side consultations/ conversations' with closeted and semi-closeted pastors and other members of the ELCA's official rosters. Often they are longing for community with others called to professional ministry with whom they can be fully themselves, without the shroud so often required among their roster colleagues.

"As a member of the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) roster (formerly the Extraordinary Candidacy Project roster), I've had the freedom to listen, learn, and grow professionally alongside other openly LGBT people. It's been a privilege and unique blessing to spend retreat and reflection time together, to worship and listen to sermons crafted for our community. We've formed lasting friendships and established a network of folks who share experiences of living out our calls in congregations, specialized ministry settings, and various professional settings.

"Each year, as the ELM collegium gathers, we have continuing education opportunities tailored to our needs and realities, Bible studies that address our community, and the chance to hear sermons that take our lives, our trials, our hopes and dreams seriously. Each time we gather, I leave renewed.

"My hope is that the Ministerium gathering of Hearts on Fire will cultivate a wider community of caring and growth for us all."

—Anita Hill, Pastor of St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church, Saint Paul, Minn.

"More than 30 years ago, I graduated from a Lutheran seminary and accepted a call to a small congregation in Georgia. Every month I drove the 100 miles each way to Atlanta for our ministerium meetings. I attended regularly because I felt that assembly of pastors would be supportive as I learned practical

things about parish ministry. Some of those pastors became good friends of mine but my sexuality was never acknowledged by them or me in those gatherings; the fear of their knowing me both as pastor and a gay man was overwhelming to all of us. It has been decades since I've had contact with any of those colleagues.

"Each month during that time I also drove to Atlanta for another gathering: the Lutherans Concerned chapter there was new, and I eagerly became an active member of it. Being with those folks was renewing and rewarding; there was no fear of being known there as both a gay man and a pastor. It was a sanctuary for me. I still count those people among my friends.

"In the decades since then I have served at several calls in various states. The pattern of people knowing me as either a gay man or as a pastor was breaking down in my life. I met other closeted clergy, and we attempted to support each other. Once, in the 1980s, we gathered in a Chicago United Church of Christ church since few of us felt safe in a Lutheran facility. We told our stories; we pledged to network. Several months later, I saw one of those clergy at an ELCA function and greeted him; he denied ever having met me, so great was his fear of being known as a pastor who was a gay man.

"My experience over three decades is that I can't live in two worlds that don't intersect. For me, being in one as a gay man or another as a pastor no longer works. In my current congregation and synod, I'm out in some ways. Some people who know in my congregation pretend not to know, even though they invite me and my partner to their gatherings.

"What I have sought for over three decades is a ministerium of LGBT Lutheran clergy where we can be supportive, no longer secretive. Though previous efforts have failed, LC/NA now is taking the lead in offering 'ministerium' as a pre-assembly gathering in July as a starter for continuing this self- and other-care in the future. I'll be there and look forward to meeting other LGBT Lutheran clergy. I suspect there are a lot of us. We have much to share with each other – the love and good news of Christ, for starters."

—Anonymous, an ELCA pastor

San Francisco State University through our homes into the Church and the world.

Assembly worship services will draw from a rich variety of traditions, including our Lutheran liturgy, while highlighting some of the gifts and talents of our own membership. From the deep roots of liturgical Lutheran services, to voices and music of our global family, the worship offerings will suit a variety of musical and liturgical tastes. The worship will be in a style that you will find comfortable, but will also push you to new experiences that may broaden your understanding of worship. The worship planning team is committed to using inclusive language. We embrace with humility and awe our ability to call upon God, in all God's fullness, in our own finite language. It is our hope that you will have an encounter with God through one or more of the worship styles represented.

Thursday, July 3: Opening Eucharist

The opening worship will be an historic yet creative Eucharist. The Rev. Bradley Schmeling will preach.

Friday, July 4: Service of Healing and Reconciliation

On Friday, worship will focus on confession, healing, reconciliation, and absolution. We will pray for healing of our own hurts as we confess the ways in

Was it not **necessary** that the **Messiah** should **suffer** these things and then enter into his glory?

—Luke 24:26

which we hurt one another. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock will preach the Word. Dr. Brock is founding co-director of Faith Voices for the Common Good, an organization dedicated to creating a nationwide community of conscience. She was a Fellow at the Harvard Divinity School Center for Values in Public Life. She is author of *Journeys By Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*, and co-author, with Susan Thistlethwaite, of *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. She and Rebecca Parker published "Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us" in 2002 and are currently at work on "Saving Paradise," an investigation of early Christian ideas of paradise, holy war and violence. Music will be provided by Bread for the Journey, a group of singers and instrumentalists who specialize in presenting songs of faith, hope and justice from the Christian church near and far.

Sunday, July 6: Sending Service to Prepare to Engage the World

We will close our assembly with a worship service that sends us out into the world. We have walked along the Emmaus road together for a while. We have eaten with Jesus. Now, we are to go forth to share our encounter with Jesus with others. The Rev. Barbara Lundblad will bring the message.



Pre-Assembly Events

Movement-building pre-events will occur from 1:00 p.m. on July 2 until noon on July 3. These events provide opportunities to go deeper into particular aspects of the LGBTQ movement. Many of the events are for a specific population. The \$50 fee includes facilitation, dinner and breakfast. Housing is one extra night.

Youth & Young Adult Forum

Designed for youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 22, this pre-event will gather young activists and advocates for the LGBTQ movement and give them an opportunity to meet, collaborate, and rock the Lutheran Church. We will spend time in worship, leadership development, and advocacy planning.

The young people involved in this forum will have continuing contact after the pre-event, staying in community throughout Hearts on Fire. They will create a community that is passionate about inclusion and translate that passion into action at the assembly and continuing back at home in their communities and congregations.

LC/NA is looking for nominations for young people to be invited to attend and be a part of this forum. If you are, or know of, a young person in the age range who would benefit from this forum, please email yoyafam@lcna.org with details. LC/NA wants to be diverse and inclusive with this invitation in every way, including regionally within North America.

Finding the I in the Middle of Racism

Racism is a complex, often bewildering issue. Sometimes it is difficult to find safe, supportive spaces to learn about the issue and express how it affects us personally. "Finding the I in the Middle of Racism" will help us sort through the complexities of racism and discern meaningful ways of addressing its personal and communal impact. This is excellent training for local and chapter leaders to receive. This pre-event is a part of LC/NA's continuing commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.

There will also be a workshop during Hearts on Fire.

Legislative Training

In the next two years through the summer of 2009, synod, churchwide, and national assemblies will take place in the United States and Canada. It's important to be prepared to create change within all of our Lutheran denominations. This legislative organizing and training will do just that. If you are on fire to help create the change you seek and are interested in legislation, this pre-event is for you. Participants can expect to spend time preparing and planning for the strategy to make policy change.

Couple Care

“Couple Care” is an outreach to all couples, of all ages and in all of life’s stages. Intentional care for couples can literally give life to a couple, renew life for an entire family and change the life of a community. Recommended for all committed couples, this event will be conducted in the style of a 24-hour retreat. This retreat is intended to deepen relationships. If you are in a relationship of more than three months or decades-long duration that shows by the strength of commitment that it has durability, Couple Care is for you both. Couples should attend together to achieve the greatest benefit.

There will also be a workshop during Hearts on Fire.



LC/NA Business

The Business Sessions are your opportunity to shape the future and direction of Lutherans Concerned/North America. During Hearts on Fire, there are going to be six hours of business sessions that will be lively, informative and interactive. During these few hours, we will hear from our Executive Director, elect the Board of Directors for the next Biennium, take up resolutions, and hear the priorities for the next two years.

To participate in the business sessions of Lutherans Concerned/North America, one must be a member. However, Lutherans Concerned/North America is granting one-year gift memberships to assembly registrants who are not already members of LC/NA. This means that if you come to Hearts on Fire, you will be able to participate in the business of LC/NA.

As we get closer, more of the business items to be considered will be posted to the assembly website, www.lcna.org/assembly. However, in the meantime, there are a few items about which you should know.

Deadline for Resolutions

Proposed resolutions in proper format (Whereas... Therefore be it resolved... careful and limited language) should be sent to the Secretary of LC/NA, secretary@lcna.org. In addition to emailed submissions, there will be a Resolutions Box at the assembly site into which submissions can be dropped. By whatever means, the deadline for submission is 7:00 p.m. PDT, Friday, July 4.

Consensus Decision-Making

Lutherans Concerned/North America operates by the consensus process for decision-making. Consensus is a process of reaching a decision with a minimum, or at least reasonable, amount of disagreement among individuals. Consensus decision-making is about the business of “listening to everyone’s ideas and taking all concerns into consideration in an attempt to find the most

universally acceptable decision possible at a particular time.” Consensus decision-making requires that individuals participate as equals, seek out and accommodate differences of opinion, promote an atmosphere of open communication, tolerate temporary indecision and slow decision-making, and weigh alternatives to find win-win possibilities.

Consensus is NOT:

- Everybody agreeing unanimously
- A decision that represents everyone’s first choice
- Allowing a person to block the whole group from coming to a decision

Their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

—Luke 24:31

I love to tell the story...

As the almost two hundred year-old hymn by Katherine Hankey says, “I love to tell the story; ‘tis pleasant to repeat; what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet.”

We do love to tell the story, whether it is of salvation by Christ and the good news of redemption in the Bible or one of our own stories. We revel in the opportunity to share with others that which has uplifted, transformed, amused, or changed us — revel, in retelling of the very familiar, — revel, in communicating to others that which is so important to us.

Stories are very powerful vehicles for transmitting moral or practical points, for revealing our moral values and for engaging others in causes important to us. But, powerful as stories are on their own, they benefit from being told in a way that increases their impact.

Rev. Tiffany Steinwert (pictured), Reconciling Ministries Network, United Methodist Church (USA), has developed just such a way to link your story narrative to achieving your goals or those of your organization, your goals of achieving full inclusion and acceptance of LGBT persons in the life of the church and the pews of its congregations.

Based on the work on Public Narrative by Marshall Ganz of Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government where he is a Lecturer in Public Policy, Tiffany’s method links the telling of our own story to the story of your organization and its goals and then to action needed now. It can be summed up as telling the “Story of Self,” the “Story of Us” and the “Story of Now”.

As Marshall Ganz says, “A good story is

drawn from the series of choice points that have structured the “plot” of your life — the challenges you faced, choices you made, and outcomes you experienced.” A public story links how you became the person you are, how the community or organization of which you are a part came to be, the people they are, and the challenges—choices—outcomes facing those people, that community, to achieve their goals.



Intuitive as this may sound, since it starts with something we are all experts on (ourselves), doing it requires training and practice to arrive at stories that are specific, are only sufficiently detailed for understanding, that tap into emotion, include challenges—choices—outcomes, offer hope and communicate our values.

Also part of the training is how to listen, how to help others hone their stories down so the story connects the dots. In this way, not only are you trained so that the stories you tell have the impact you desire, you are trained to help others achieve the same skill. Active listening and good coaching are important in this regard.

Tiffany will train us in this method of Strategic Storytelling at Hearts on Fire in July in San Francisco. The training you will receive will change forever how and why you tell your story. You will be able to link your story directly to positive action to achieve full inclusion. You will be able to help others do the same. Come. Tell your story. Learn to change others. Create the Spirit-led world of full inclusion so evident in the Gospels and teachings of Christ.

Consensus IS:

- Everyone able to paraphrase the issue to demonstrate personal understanding
- Everyone having a chance to voice opinion on the issue
- Having enough people in favor of the decision to enable it to be carried out
- The willingness to try the decision, at least for a prescribed period of time, without those who doubt or disagree sabotaging it

Group conditions that support consensus:

- Unity of purpose
- Equal access to power
- Autonomy of the group from external hierarchical structures
- Ample time
- A willingness in the group to attend to process, attitudes, and to learn to practice skills for meeting participation, facilitation and communication.

Consensus is not voting. Thus, consensus is indicated by prolonged silence. LC/NA celebrates having achieved consensus with the “wave” (waving of the hands in the air).



Children, Youth and Families

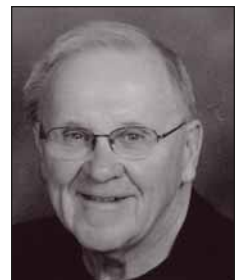
Hearts on Fire is excited to offer opportunities for children, youth and families who wish to make the assembly a family affair. Infants, children and youth

July 3–5 at Christ Lutheran Church, just a mile from the San Francisco State University Campus, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The VBS is open to any child whose parents are attending Hearts on Fire, as well as local congregations. Counselors will be provided by Mount Cross Lutheran Bible Camp and congregational volunteers. The theme for the VBS will closely follow the theme for Hearts on Fire. The VBS participants will participate in the closing worship on Sunday, July 6. The cost for the VBS will be \$40 per child, and \$60 for more than one child from a given family. Lunch will be included in the VBS. Children will eat breakfast and dinner with their families at Hearts on Fire.

The Jim Siefkes Justice-Maker Award

The Jim Siefkes Justice-Maker Award was established by Lutherans Concerned/North America in 1992 to recognize superior and tireless efforts of straight allies on behalf of LGBT Lutherans.

The criteria for the Jim Siefkes Justice-Maker Award reflect the contributions of its namesake. Recipient must be a non-LGBT Lutheran who has made significant contributions to advancing justice for LGBT Lutherans. Actions should have a broad impact and not be limited to a particular locale or region.



*Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had made been **made known** to them in the **breaking of bread**.* —Luke 24:35

are welcome to attend and participate in any aspect of the assembly with their parents or guardians. We are working to make our worship engaging for all ages. We are also putting together activities in which families can participate together. We offer a special “kid registration rate” of \$50 for children over five years of age who wish to participate in the Assembly. To facilitate family discussion, kids and parents will experience parallel events and subjects (for instance, during Vacation Bible School).

Child Care/Babysitting

For children under the age of five, a Child Care service will be provided. Children will be cared for on the San Francisco State University campus by professionals during specific hours. Children will need to be pre-registered for child care, so that we can accurately plan for an appropriate number of care providers.

Vacation Bible School

Several Bay Area RIC congregations have joined together to offer a Vacation Bible School for children between the ages of 5 and 15. VBS will be offered

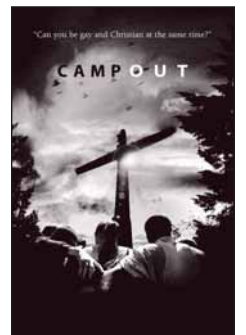
Nominees for the Siefkes Award are evaluated and the recipient is selected by the LC/NA Board of Directors, and the Award will be presented at the LC/NA Biennial Assembly.



Entertainment

Camp Out

Camp Out is a feature documentary film that follows ten Mid-Western teenagers as they attend a first overnight camp for gay Christian youth. For these six boys and four girls, it's just as hard to come out as Christian as it is to come out as gay. They're caught in the battle between religion, politics and sexuality that's raging in the United States today. But the kids who attend this camp have refused to turn their back on God and instead are struggling to find a way to be true to both their spirituality and their sexual



identity... to be the whole person God intended them to be.

Camp Out showcases these brave kids by inter-cutting intimate cinema-verité scenes with candid interviews. The teens narrate their own personal journeys as they struggle to find acceptance in a religion that preaches that their sexuality is sinful. This film tackles the question of why, despite the homophobic climate of many Christian churches, these kids yearn to be a part of the Christian faith.

Bread for the Journey

Bread for the Journey (*pictured right*) is a musical group that has appeared at hundreds of Lutheran events where music plays a key role. Bread for the Journey offers a spirited, eclectic repertoire, celebrating the faithful voices of Christian sisters and brothers from around the world. In addition to a diverse collection of songs of faith from North America, Bread for the Journey introduces a wealth of music resources from the church in Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe. While many of the group's songs feature *a capella* singing, others are backed with a range of appropriate instrumentation—from guitars, flutes and fiddles to congas, claves and synthesizers.

Bread for the Journey teaches and leads songs that can easily be sung by people from many musical and liturgical backgrounds and introduces music in an accessible and non-threatening way. The group encourages congregational singing as an integral part of worship and emphasizes corporate singing over individual performance. Bread for the Journey collects and shares songs that will be remembered and used.

The music shared by Bread for the Journey reflects gospel values of justice, peace, liberation, the integrity of creation, and a spirit of inclusiveness that marked Jesus' ministry. Bread for the Journey is committed to introducing powerful and theologically solid music that reflects our church's increasing cultural diversity.

Transcendence Gospel Choir

The Transcendence Gospel Choir (TGC) is a local music ministry for the transgender community, performing gospel music in worship services, at pride events, and as outreach to the community itself.

Recognizing that religion is being used as one of the main weapons to justify and perpetuate misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and intolerance of diversity, the choir's mission is to challenge those ideas from *within* a place of faith. Because transgendered people throughout history have played significant roles in spiritual worship, TGC strives to empower that community and reclaim that calling.

"We endeavor to demonstrate that the preconceived notion of a bi-polar, heterosexual, hetero-gendered 'natural order' is not reflected in the



nature of God or the ministry of Jesus Christ. In this way, we will challenge intolerance and hatred, transcend boundaries and restore hope to our communities."

Both Bread for the Journey and Transcendence will participate in worship and entertainment activities.

San Francisco State University

Our host for Hearts on Fire is San Francisco State University (SFSU), www.sfsu.edu. SFSU is a cutting-edge urban institution with a long list of high-profile alumni. Their campus is expansive, rolling space with much to explore. Our general sessions will be in the McKenna Theatre, in the Creative Arts building. Our dining will be in the Seven Hills Dining Center. Be sure to spend some time lounging in the grass or getting coffee in one of the kiosks.

Housing

Our lodging is in the Village at Centennial Square. The Village is designed to offer the best on-campus housing options in an apartment-style community that incorporates a fitness center, as well as several

Stay with us, because it is almost evening.

—Luke 24:29

eating and convenience store options. Participants staying on the SFSU campus will choose double or a limited number of single occupancy rooms in a furnished apartment with a kitchen and two

bathrooms. Each of the units has beds for four persons, 2 bathrooms, and living space. There is no traditional dormitory space.

Limited housing will be available before and after Hearts on Fire. If you so choose, you can come up to a week early, participate in San Francisco Pride, tour the city, and participate in a pre-event... all before the actual Assembly begins!



Contributors and Financial Support to Hearts on Fire

Equally important as all the planning that goes into an assembly of this scale is the financial support of organizations. This financial support allows registration fees to remain at levels that allow larger number of people to participate.

Planning Partners

Lutherans Concerned/North America
Lutherans Concerned/San Francisco Bay Area
The Naming Project

Powerfully and Permanently Part of the Family

My partner Jan and I were recently down in Iowa to visit with Jan's mom, Millie. It would have been Millie and Homer's 68th wedding anniversary. Jan's dad Homer was buried in the family plot in Story City, Iowa on Valentine's Day 2005. We went to the little white clapboard Hauge tradition Lutheran Church on Sunday. It was too cold and icy to go to the cemetery. So, I asked Millie if I could look at pictures from the wedding. Millie was delighted and got out the wedding book as well as four other albums and a box of black and white snapshots with curled edges and writing on the backs. We sat, Millie, Jan, Jan's brother Mark and me, all of us on the couch, the southern sun giving light and warmth, and poured through the pictures.

It took several hours, but no one got tired or remotely bored. Here was the family history. Those clothes from the '40s were so fabulous! Of course, there were many stories, rich stories. There was Daisy, the dog who had pulled a Lassie and saved Uncle Rob when he fell through boards in the hay loft and hung there wedged, unable to breathe only his chin and neck holding him from the fall. There was Camp Wiwita (pronounced *wy-wee-taw*) where family and friends had piled into a tiny lakeside cabin to vacation together year after year. There were babies, confirmations, graduations, and more weddings. Even a shot of Jan and myself made it into one of the albums. It was a very serious shot of me. And Jan was shining brightly with a grand smile. We were in coordinating outfits. Thankfully, we got over that. We laughed, we got teary, we laughed some more. I asked a lot of questions and learned so much about the principle value of this clan: family.

For our members who are LGBT the whole family connection can be tenuous or downright dangerous and certainly disheartening. Many of us have created families of choice to supplement or supplant our families of birth. Some of us are fortunate enough to have strong families of birth and choice. At Hearts on Fire we are going to begin two projects that combine our photos and stories of our families of all kinds. We are family and it's time we tell that story.

Our Hearts on Fire Family Album

At Hearts on Fire everyone will have the opportunity to have a picture made. Families of love, families of fun, families of birth, families of friends, families of choice, and families of one are invited to take part. Come as you are, no make-up sessions required. Pictures will be available for purchase and will be compiled in our Hearts on Fire Photo Album along with contact information for those participants willing to be included. The album will also include photos from Hearts on Fire.

Table Blessings Project

At Hearts on Fire we will begin collecting pictures, stories and favorite recipes from families, especially those who have had a blessing or marriage service, to create a new resource called Table Blessings. Bring your own family photos or use the ones created for the Hearts on Fire Family Album. This creative booklet will include table prayers from advocate and poet, David Weiss. This resource will be available to congregations in conversation about same-gender marriage as well as for synod assemblies in 2009. —Emily Eastwood

Becoming a Supporter, Sponsor, or Underwriter

Sponsorship of Hearts on Fire begins at the level of a contribution of \$100.00 or more, which entitles your congregation or organization to a variety of visibility options.

Underwriters: \$10,000+

- The Philip N. Knutson Endowment
- Lutherans Concerned/Los Angeles
- Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries
- Arcus Foundation

Opportunities exist at other levels:

- Sponsors: \$1,000–\$9,999
- Supporters: \$250–\$999
- RIC Supporters: RIC settings who contribute \$100–\$249

For your organization or congregation to become a sponsor of Hearts on Fire, download and complete the sponsorship form found at www.lcna.org/assembly/downloads/hof_sponsor_form.pdf, and return with payment to: Lutherans Concerned/ North America, Re: Hearts on Fire, P.O. Box 4707, St. Paul, MN 55104.

There are also opportunities to advertise in the Assembly Bulletin and to put up an exhibit at the assembly. Details on these opportunities can be found on www.lcna.org/assembly.

For additional information, contact Ross Murray, Conference Administrator at assembly@lcna.org or 651-665-0861 ext. 120.



Getting Around by Muni

MUNI's M-Line streetcar, www.sfmta.com/cms/mmaps/documents/M.pdf, goes directly past SFSU to downtown, including the Castro District (Castro Station), St. Francis Lutheran Church (Church Street Station), the Cable Cars and other downtown sites (Powell Street Station).

MUNI fares are \$1.50 per ride (including a transfer that is good for 90 minutes). Cable Cars are \$5.00 (transfers may not be used, but day passes may be). Day passes are \$11 for one day, \$18 for 3 days. For heavy-duty sightseeing, a \$54 pass will include admission to several city museums and attractions as well as functioning as a MUNI pass.

Other modes of transportation

BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), www.bart.gov, is the best connection to Oakland, Berkeley and other points in the East Bay. Fares vary with the length of the ride.

Taxicabs are available from several taxi companies by phone (Luxor, Yellow, City Cab are the most common). Fares are relatively high. ▼

Co-Chair



LEN WEISER

Spring is just around the corner! This warm-weather person sure is ready for that! With spring comes new life and new energy. In the past I've taken the opportunity in the Co-Chair article to let you know what your Board of Directors is doing as well as some highlights of the organization as a whole. I will continue in that vein this time as well.

When I think of springtime, I think of budding flowers, more daylight, warmer temperatures, children playing in the streets, people running along the river's edge. Other images come to mind when

*We never go wrong with **telling our stories** and **building relationships**.*

thinking about the springtime as well – what it means to spring forth with ideas, commitments and new ventures.

Rooted in Christ, LC/NA is seeing many things springing forth and budding. Here is what I am catching sight of as we move into spring:

Regional Coordinators are starting to sprout again by planning for the 2008 synod assembly season, which is about to get underway within the ELCA and the ELCIC. Conversations are continuing and momentum is building around resolutions to be passed at synod assemblies and sent to both national church bodies for consideration. The first draft of the ELCA sexuality statement has been released to church members.

Last year, Hearts on Fire – the 2008 LC/NA Assembly and RIC conference – began to take root,

and now, the trunk is growing and leaves are budding as this amazing event is taking shape. I hope you have checked out this event on the LC/NA website (<http://www.lcna.org/assembly>). I anticipate seeing many of you there in San Francisco in July. Come, help us tend the garden.

We have new outreach ministries taking root with our Youth Ministry efforts (thanks to Kate our LVC intern) and a new ministerium of rostered and waiting-to-be-rostered leaders as a result of our gathering at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA) in Chicago this past summer. Ground is breaking and signs of new life and possibilities are popping up.

ELCA synods are following the direction of the 2007 CWA and restraint/refrain is holding. What a beautiful flower this is!

You will soon receive information about the nominating process for the next board of directors to be elected at the 2008 Assembly held in conjunction with Hearts on Fire. Again, there is new life in LC/NA as new leaders rise to the challenge. I also want to recognize the new “freedom” that Co-Chair Jeannine Janson will have come July 2008. While, I'm already grieving her departure from the board, I know that she will remain an active, contributing member of LC/NA. The time she has spent with the board, first as a regional coordinator (2000–2002), then co-chair from 2002–2008, along with her involvement with the *One Voice* campaign, has forever shaped the blossoming bouquet of flowers that LC/NA is. She has been instrumental in helping the Board of Directors move from a day-to-day operations board to one of policy governance. Even though her term isn't over yet, I want to say THANK YOU, JEANNINE! You have planted many seeds and God will bring the growth.

Isaiah 61:11 states,

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as the garden causes what is sown in it to spring up; so the LORD GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. [NRSV]

I pray that all members of the Body of Christ firmly believe that true justice will one day prevail. God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations! Keep up the work, build those relationships and tell your stories. We never go wrong with telling our stories and building relationships. Plant and nurture! Rooted in Christ, savor the growth and newness and give thanks. Blessings to you all during this springtime of year! ▼

MOVING?

Filling out a change of address form ensures the delivery of your *Concord*. If you are moving, take a minute to complete this form. It will save you time and LC/NA money. In the end, that's just plain good stewardship!

Name _____

Old Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Mail completed form to Lutherans Concerned/North America, Inc., **Attn: Database Updates**, PO Box 4707, St. Paul, MN 55104-0707, or email to database@lcna.org.

What Do We Do Once We Get There?

RIC Congregational and Institutional Stories
by Carol Dunn

What do we do once we get there? This question is typical not only of children vacationing somewhere other than Disney, but also of congregations that have made or are considering the choice to become RIC. Bridging between stating a welcome and practicing it can be very daunting. But that bridge to practicing welcome is under construction.

Exciting things happen in many places and at many levels. Sometimes, our youth remind us that

That bridge to practicing welcome is under construction.

Christianity needs to be put into practice to be real. In 2007, the **Lutheran Student Movement** amended and updated its welcoming statement to read as follows:

The Lutheran Student Movement affirms that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people share with all others the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people are welcome within the membership of this movement upon making the same affirmation of faith that all other people make. As members of this movement, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people are expected and encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of this movement.

Sometimes, a synod and a bishop, by their public position, facilitate welcoming. For example, in the **Oregon Synod**, the Bishop presided at the worship service on 2008 RIC Sunday. The service took place at Mission of the Atonement, an ecumenical community of Lutherans and Catholics, with both

the Lutheran pastor and the Roman Catholic priest participating. Pr. Ron Nitz from Mt. Carmel, another RIC congregation, preached.

Sometimes, an innovative congregation such as **St. John's Lutheran**, Madison, Wisconsin, can offer inspiration to others. Back in October, on National Coming Out Day, St. John's celebrated with a special service intended as a time for reconciliation and affirmation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender siblings in Christ,

their families and allies. Planned by members of the congregation, the event was a Service of Affirmation and Inclusivity, modeled on the ancient form of Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Miriam Mueller-Owens of St. John's reports that more than two dozen people gathered in the narthex with candles, and proceeded down the aisle to place their candles into an area of sand near a large cross on the floor. They read Bible passages, told their stories, sang and shared prayers. Among those who attended were families with young children and retired people, members of the church and visitors.

And sometimes congregations move differently even when they are geographically close and are all RIC. A few move mountains in a short time, some tread very, very lightly, and many go forward in deliberate steps to keep unity and harmony and, at the same time, breathe life into their RIC statements. In some cases, congregations simply stall after adopting RIC statements, as people need to catch their collective breath. The preparation process sometimes brings out feelings which parish members kept carefully covered up by a generic "all are welcome" banner. In the Metro Chicago Synod, three congregations that have been RIC for 10 years or more have followed different paths.

Holy Trinity Lutheran has been RIC since the early 1990s. Since then, they have blessed relationships, participated in the Pride parade, and held several LGBT spirituality groups and discussions. The congregation, which completed the ELCA sexuality study, now has a number of same-gender couples with children. Some members are involved with LC/NA, they have a LGBTQ social group, and since the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, Holy Trinity congregation has designated some of its benevolence for the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM).

Carolyn Doughty, LC/Chicago Communications Coordinator, points out that the church is in a neighborhood with a high concentration of gays and lesbians. Holy Trinity is "in the heart of what was called 'Boystown.'" Businesses in the area are friendly. A Chicago newspaper described the area as one where it was "safe" to be LGBT and out.

Ebenezer Lutheran, Chicago, has also moved forward, though in deliberate steps. The church took 18 months to study the issues, voting to be RIC in 1993. Over the last 15 years, they have placed a permanent rainbow flag on their sign, advertised in LGBT media, and opened the building to LGBT-oriented groups. After still more study, the congregation voted to authorize the blessing of relationships in the sanctuary, and a number of blessings have taken place. LGBT members participate in the full life of the congregation, including leadership positions. Same-gender couples with children have found a home at Ebenezer. Pastors and members have regularly marched in the Chicago Gay Pride Parade.

Ebenezer's Congregational Council has written in support both of pastors removed from pulpits and of

RIC Settings

Added to the Roster since last issue

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, North Quincy, Massachusetts

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

St. John Lutheran Church, Westville, New Jersey

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlottesville, Virginia

Unity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois

Wartburg College Alliance, Waverly, Iowa

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

ELM candidates at their ordination, and has sent LGBT and lesbian members to other synod congregations discussing this ministry. Pastors and members attended and supported several recent ordinations of ELM candidates. They are presently considering constitutional changes to allow them to call pastoral candidates from alternative rosters.

In a traditionally conservative county, **St. Paul Lutheran Church** is located in suburban Wheaton, Illinois, and is the only welcoming and affirming congregation in town. Therefore, when they adopted their Statement of Welcome and Affirmation in 1998, they posted no rainbows, but identified themselves on their outdoor signboard as “An open, affirming and inclusive church, welcoming all who seek God.” Gay members agreed with the plan, noting that the Statement includes people of all ethnicities, all economic situations and those with addictions or mental health issues; they said the rainbow symbol would identify only one group of many. Furthermore, gay and lesbian people understand the meaning of “welcoming and affirming” without the rainbow.

LGBT people know about St. Paul’s primarily by word of mouth. Some learned through a PFLAG presentation at work; others were drawn to the pastor. Their website, which includes the congregation’s RIC Statement, has also drawn traditional families who want a safe, open environment for their children. Retirees come for the many opportunities for ministry. The question “Do you feel encouraged to join in all ministries at St. Paul?” drew responses from self-declared LGBT people of “Yes, more than I ever expected to be,” and “Absolutely. We’re worn out from all the

Next **RIC Core Team** Leadership Trainings

August 7–10, 2008

Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ohio

August 21–24, 2008

Milwaukee Area Synod, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To register contact:

Jerry Vagts, grassroots@lcna.org,
651-665-0861

volunteering!” Gay and lesbian members are active in all lay aspects of the congregation including large and small groups and leadership positions.

The congregation has faced occasional challenges, including the issue of LGBT members teaching children. Organized discussions under the title of “Harmony in Diversity” brought the issue into the open and addressed fears and stereotypes. St. Paul has not yet hosted blessing of same-gender relationships though the pastor is willing to conduct them outside the church. An announcement of a commitment anniversary for a same-gender couple was listed recently in the church bulletin. ▼

“In Honor of...”

In Honor of...	Honored by...	
Martha Alford	In memory of Marth Alford	The Rev. Jen Nagel & the Rev. Jane McBride
Jodi Barry & Jenny Mason	As they commit their lives to each other and to God on October 6, 2007	Jill & Steve Abenth
Brett Bowman	In honor of Brett Bowman’s Birthday	Robert & Dale Bowman
The Rev. Katheryn King and Dave Eitland		John Stoltenberg & Joey
The Rev. Daryl D. Koenig	Donation in Honor of the Rev. Daryl D. Koenig	Virginia Balter, Rev. Dawn Silvius and Kathryn Yandell
Steve Miller & Wayne Morris	In honor of the Blessing Service for Steve Miller & Wayne Morris	Doris Hanson
Wayne Morris		Doyle & Luciene Morris
The Rev. Shawn Newton	Ordained to the UU ministry, June 10, 2007	Julie Reuning-Scherer
Heather Olson & Jessica Myhre	As they commit their lives to each other and to God on September 22, 2007	Jill & Steve Abenth
The Rev. David Parsons	In honor and appreciation	The Lindley-Geiger & Quinn-Gacioch families
Ken Petersen	In memory of Ken Petersen	Rev. Nancy J. Hanson
David Ranheim	In honor of the 65th Birthday of David Ranheim	Karmi Anna Mattson
Jeff Ramm & Neal Hauschild	In honor of the Blessing Service for Jeff Ramm & Neal Hauschild	43 family members and friends
Carolyn Soucy	In memory of Carolyn Soucy	Doug Pulak
Carolyn Soucy	In memory of Carolyn Soucy	The Rev. Jen Nagel & the Rev. Jane McBride
Wayne & Sindy Tellekson	In memory of Margaret Tellekson	Loren & Ruth Halvorsen
Dale Truscott & 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



Extraordinary Ordination... Ordinand...and Calling Congregation

By **Jeannine Janson**, LC/NA Co-Chair

Since October 2006, I've had the pleasure of attending five extraordinary ordinations, the most recent being that of Jennifer Lea Nagel, on January 19, 2008. I'm always moved by

extraordinary ordinations... partly because each one is evidence of the progress we are making in our work for the full participation of LGBT persons in the Lutheran church... but mostly because extraordinary ordinations are much more than evidence of progress... each ordination is another LGBT pastor's call to ministry affirmed and made real and another ELCA congregation acting boldly.

For me, the stories of the ordinands and the calling congregations are as important and compelling as the ordination events. While the events are signs of the change we seek, it is the stories of the ordinands and the calling congregations that give depth and meaning to the events. Thus, this article is about the 13th ordination *extra ordinem*, the ordinand, Jen Nagel, and the congregation that called her, Salem English Lutheran Church of Minneapolis.

The Ordination and Installation

On January 19, 2008, hundreds of people braved sub-zero temperatures to gather at Salem English Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and ordain Jennifer Lea Nagel. The Rev. Nagel is the 13th member of the

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries roster to be ordained *extra ordinem* because the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) does not allow the ordinations of individuals in same-sex relationships.

Jen Nagel's ordination took place 18 years after the first extraordinary ordinations of the Rev. Ruth Frost, the Rev. Jeff Johnson, and the Rev. Phyllis Zillhart, which were held January 20, 1990, in San Francisco, California.

Jen's message in her ordination service bulletin references the 1990 ordinations and says, in part, "Now, 18 years later, I experience awe in the witness of the Gospel alive in communities of faith, and frustration that extraordinary ordinations are even necessary. Our tradition's long history of reformation guides us as we stand with our hopes and prayers before God this day to participate in this extraordinary ordination. My heart is full of gratitude for your presence that mingles with the prayers of friends and colleagues far and wide. I give thanks for the people of Salem English Lutheran Church who so faithfully have listened for the Holy Spirit's calling to vibrant and authentic ministry; for the many congregations and communities that have nurtured, challenged and empowered me; for my beloved Jane, my folks, Jim and Marcia, Jane's folks, Sue and David, and for our families, a number of whom are worshipping with us today. Praise God for these extraordinary winds of the Spirit!"

In her sermon, the ordination preacher, the Rev. Angela Denise Davis, recognized the extraordinary action Salem English Lutheran Church was taking and their response to the Gospel. "Being extraordinary is being open and willing to show God brings people into the fold." Citing the story of Peter and Cornelius, she exhorted the congregation to "listen to Joppa; do work in Caesarea; and know there will be fallout in Jerusalem."

The Ordaining Ministers included three retired ELCA bishops – the Rev. Darold Beekmann, the Rev.

Retired bishops the Rev. Lowell Erdahl, the Rev. Darold Beekmann, and the Rev. David Brown participated in the ordination service of Jen Nagel, right.



David Brown and the Rev. Lowell Erdahl – and so many vested clergy that the nine pews reserved for them were not enough.

Pr. Nagel's stole was presented by her partner, the Rev. Jane McBride, and her parents, Jim and Marcia Nagel. The Installing Minister was the Rev. Mary Halvorson of Grace University Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

As has been the case at every extraordinary ordination I have witnessed, the applause following the acclamation of Rev. Nagel's ordination was prolonged and as loud as we could make it. Our applause was an expression of celebration... of joy... of holy excitement.

Jennifer Lea Nagel... an Extraordinary Ordinand

Jen was baptized on May 7, 1972, at Memorial Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Ames, Iowa, and grew up at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (ALC, ELCA) in New Ulm, Minnesota, affirming her baptism on October 30, 1988. Jen is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, studied at the University of St. Andrews in St. Andrews, Scotland, holds a certificate from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (1999), and a Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) from University of Chicago Divinity School (1998) where she received the Elsa Marty Entering Fellowship and The Rhind Ministry Award.

Jen completed her ELCA internship at Lord of Light Lutheran Church/Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She completed her field work at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Chicago and her first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Since 2000, Jen's candidacy in the ELCA has been postponed pending a change in church policy. Shortly after that, in 2000, Jen was approved and joined the roster of the Extraordinary Candidacy Project, now Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries.

Jen's passion and callings include urban ministry, the transforming edge in the church, and collaborations of all kinds. Jen's care for ecumenism began when she was in Scotland, was nurtured when she served as a steward to the 8th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, and continued through many years on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and engagement with the US Board of the WCC. Through ELCA Global Missions, Jen served as a global volunteer, working for the Youth Department of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, and also the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia.

Jen is a trained Intentional Interim Pastor, has guided wilderness trips at Wilderness Canoe Base and Amnicon Outdoor Ministries, and currently serves on the Synod Council and Executive Committee of the Minneapolis Area Synod, as



Jen was assisted during the Eucharist by Sarah Kunze, a lay leader at Salem English Lutheran Church.

Co-Chair of the synod's Partnership Table, as Chaplain for the Board of Lutherans Concerned/North America, and Collegium Chair of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries.

Jen began her service at Salem English Lutheran Church four and half years ago during a time of intentional interim and transformation. Prior to serving at Salem, Jen served Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis as Minister for Community

The *applause* was prolonged and as loud as we could make it.

Resources in ministry with people experiencing homelessness, and at Hennepin County Medical Center as a Chaplaincy Resident and then as a Chaplain.

Jen and her spouse, the Rev. Jane McBride, live in north Minneapolis. They love camping, canoeing, traveling, and long walks, and enjoy cooking and eating with good friends and family. Jane is Associate Pastor at Falcon Heights United Church of Christ in Falcon Heights, and grew up a UCC "pastor's kid." They met at University of Chicago Divinity School and fell in love in the north woods. Together they await growing their family through a domestic adoption.

Jen had this to say about her call to Salem: "I feel blessed to work with and for a diverse congregation that is willing to be transformational, to grapple with hard questions and take bold actions. While I have been serving as the Pastoral Minister of our congregation for four and a half years, I look forward to the accountability and affirmation of the larger church that comes with ordination. The ELCA's

continued on page 18

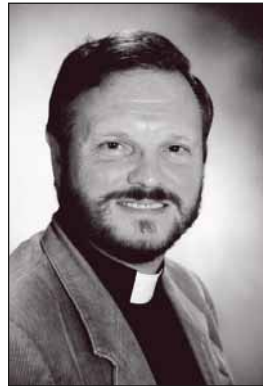
From Missouri to the Emerald City

By **Pr. Martin Billmeier**, St. Lucas Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio

It was a long journey out of the closet for the Rev. Robert Barker. A fifty-nine-year-old Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastor (now on “emeritus” status with his district), Barker was forced to

resign from his call at Prince of Peace Lutheran in Clare, Michigan, in July of 2004 after proposing he teach a congregational Bible study on the topic of homosexuality and the Bible. After his resignation, his explanatory letter to his congregation noted, “I was ‘invited’ and strongly urged to resign as your pastor because some of the leaders of your congregation did not want to have a Bible study on what the Bible says and does not say on the issue of homosexuality and how it applies to the Christian faith.”

Barker grew up in the Kalamazoo, Michigan area. His parents were Dutch Reformed in background, but he attended Sunday school only occasionally and was never baptized. What complicated his story was his burgeoning awareness of being different because



God was not cooperating at all in changing me because he already **accepted me the way he made me.**

of his sexual and romantic attraction to members of the same sex. After serving in the United States Army during the Vietnam War (he was stationed in Berlin), Barker attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo beginning in 1970. There he was active in the Lutheran campus chapel where WMU history professor and LCMS clergyperson, the Rev. Dr. Paul L. Maier, was pastor. Barker also attended a local American Lutheran Church, Prince of Peace Lutheran in Portage, Michigan, where Rev. Dr. Rex Heidman was pastor. He decided to become a Lutheran Christian and was baptized at the ALC church and confirmed by Dr. Maier at the campus chapel. He joined the ALC congregation, but finding himself drawn to a conservative theology – which he confesses he used to hide behind as a gay man – he later transferred to a local LCMS congregation. “Of course, I continued to be closeted and in self-denial and conflict about my true sexual orientation,” he notes.

“It was about this time I came to believe that if I

were a good Christian, God would eventually cure me of homosexuality. I also came to believe that by committing myself to the Christian ministry this would also move God to heal me,” says Barker, “At this time I also began praying for this healing and for God’s forgiveness for what I was. Outwardly I presented myself as a confident, faith-filled Christian. Yet, inside I was very conflicted and didn’t see myself as either confident or faith-filled. In reality, I was in spiritual turmoil and confusion. But in addition to repressing and denying my true sexual feelings, I was also repressing and denying my true spiritual state of being.”

Barker finished college, attended seminary, and received his first call as a pastor in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. “My studies during college and seminary served as a convenient excuse for not dating,” he says, “And when I entered the pastorate, I excused my lack of dating and pursuing a wife with the pious excuse that I was too busy with my work and did not want to divide my time between a family and my church obligations. How convenient and pious an excuse it was. I portrayed myself as a voluntary celibate who was sacrificing having a wife and family for the sake of Christ and his Church. This, of course, did not prevent the matchmakers in the congregations I served as pastor trying to find the perfect wife for me. I had to devise strategies to put them off. I tell you, it takes a lot of work and effort to be a closeted gay man in the ministry!”

As one hears Rob Barker’s story, one gets the impression that he, as many closeted LGBT people do, turned to conservative and homophobic institutions as a way to avoid the truth about himself. At one point, he returned to the army as an officer in the Reserve Chaplain Corps. “I found out I didn’t like army life any more as an officer than I liked it as an enlisted man. Of course, there was the stress of being a closeted gay man in the military.” After five years, he chose to resign his commission and received his second honorable discharge from the army.

Over twenty-five years, he served three LCMS congregations. But while he lived in the closet during those years, the Holy Spirit was at work. “No amount of fervent prayer, repentance, or fasting for God’s healing was going to change me into a heterosexual person,” he says, “God was not cooperating at all in changing me because he already accepted me the way he made me.” Like Jonah running to Tarshish, Barker was running hard away from God’s design for him. In his early years at his last call in Clare, Michigan he even turned to reparative psychotherapy. “For a year I had weekly long-distance phone therapy sessions with a psychologist with the Joseph Nicolosi Reparative Therapy Clinic in California. It didn’t change me into a heterosexual, but it did help me deal with a lot of hostility that I had accumulated in

twenty-plus years of pastoral ministry, so it wasn't a total waste of my time and money." Robert was coming out to himself and as he turned to the writings of the Rev. Mel White (*Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America*) and Metropolitan Community Church founder Troy Perry (*The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay*) he came to the wonderful realization that he could be both gay and Christian. "Their books and the books of others became my real therapy to a road of self-acceptance, resolution, and self-integration, and the end to my self-denial and self-loathing," he says.

At the same time, he began to move from an inerrant view of Scripture to a progressive interpretation where the "lively voice of Christ," as Luther would say, sprang from the pages of Scriptures to set him free. He began to challenge his tradition's literalistic interpretations. Barker notes with a wry sense of humor, "I began rocking the boat and eventually rocked myself right out of it. This happened when I suggested to my former congregation that we ought to do an objective study of what the Bible says about homosexuality by looking at the most up-to-date exegetical scholarship of those scripture passages which fundamentalist Christians have been using to clobber LGBT people because they have been mistranslated, misinterpreted, and misapplied to homosexuality as we know and understand it today."

Today Robert continues to live in Clare with his partner of nine years, Steven Egler, whom he describes as "the joy of my life" and who, with his doctorate in Music, is teaching in the pipe organ department of the School of Music at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The couple enjoys visiting and photographing lighthouses of the Great Lakes. Barker's forced resignation in 2004 from his congregation has been a professional and economic disruption in his life, and he continues looking for full-time employment. He hopes to find a position with some organization that advocates for the rights of the LGBT community.

Sadly, Barker reports that following the rejection of his previous congregation, he has not found a spiritual community to call his own. He feels emotionally severed from his denomination and has "no fond feelings" for the LCMS. He reports that neither his colleagues in ministry nor his district president offered him pastoral care as he went through the trauma of separation from his faith community. He did briefly participate at an ELCA congregation, but conflict in that community turned him off to the organized Christian community as he has found himself "disillusioned with Christian congregations and the way Christians treat people." He describes himself as "spiritual, but not connected." He is involved in a new online secure chat forum (see "Lutherans Freed in Christ" on page 18) that LC/NA is creating for LGBT members and clergy of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods to have

an outlet for support and information.

As for many of us who began our LGBT journeys in the more theologically conservative Missouri or Wisconsin Synods, it has not been an easy road out of the closet for Robert Barker, but it is a journey he treasures, for it has brought him to a place where he may be who God created him to be, a place where he lives in the freedom of God's grace as an openly gay man. ▼

RIC in the News

Rick Steves, nationally-known host of the long running public television travel series "Rick Steve's Europe" was recently named winner of the Wittenberg Award by The Luther Institute, an affiliate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Pa.). The award recognizes outstanding service to church and society.

Steves and his family are members of the RIC congregation, **Trinity Lutheran** in Lynnwood, Washington. His public TV series stresses the idea that travelers should respectfully maximize contact with the culture, visiting restaurants, shops, and activities off the tourist path.



Notes from the International Program Committee (IPC)

Singapore: On February 8, 2008, the former Methodist Bishop of Singapore, the Right Rev. Yap Kim Hao, released a joint statement with the Rev. Gilbert Caldwell of the United Methodist Church in the United States to the press. The statement was addressed to the upcoming General Conference of the UMCUSA meeting April 23–May 2, 2008. It calls for the Conference to "rescind its negative legislation vis-à-vis LGBT persons and instead commit itself to affirm homosexuality and include LGBT persons in the parish in the world in which we live." The Director of the IPC of LC/NA met with Bishop Yap at the end of 2007 in Singapore and initiated liaison with the Free Church established by Bishop Yap. It is hoped that the Bishop or a representative of the Free Church will attend the LC/NA Assembly, Hearts on Fire, in San Francisco this July.

Europe: The European Forum will be holding its annual Spring meetings April 30–May 4 in England this year. We will be sending representatives to the sessions and hope that the Forum will send representatives to attend and present a workshop at Hearts on Fire. We hope to have several such workshops planned for Hearts on Fire, all the more reason to be sure to make your reservations soon.

Update from Latvia: Averta Evaneliska Draudze, the congregation led by Pastor Maris Sants in Riga, Latvia, has applied for affiliate status with LC/NA. The application remains pending until the statement of congregational welcome has been broadened to include bisexual and transgender persons.

Russia: Moscow gays continue to be divided on tactics. Last May the first-ever gay pride parade, timed to coincide with a commemoration of the 13th anniversary of the legalization of homosexuality in Russia, was aborted by a combination of the Russian Orthodox Church, politicians, the police, skinheads, and the weather. This may have been a defeat for LGBT civil rights, but the gay community in Moscow had mixed feelings about the attention that the parade might have brought to them. Many there feel it is too soon to use confrontation as a tactic since the overwhelming majority is homophobic. The debate about next steps and what to do this year continues and reflects debates in many corners of the world: What is the most effective form of advocacy?

Other: Countries in Africa and the Middle East continue to provide disheartening news on LGBT rights and associated issues. In Morocco, for example, the court has sentenced six men to between four and ten months in prison for "homosexuality," as one of the lawyers pointed out, this conviction was handed down without any proof of such acts, without any witnesses, and without even a certain date or place identified by the court.

—Philip Moeller, Director, IPC

New Forum, “Lutherans Freed In Christ,” Announced

On March 18, 2008, LC/NA announced “Lutherans Freed in Christ” (LFIC), a safe and secure online forum for all LGBT Lutherans, including those from the Lutheran Church –

Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, who for personal reasons cannot or choose not to be out. At this forum all LGBT Lutherans will find support and have the space to minister to and interact with one another freely and safely. There is a permanent link on the Home Page of the LCNA website, www.lcna.org, or you can go directly to the forum at <http://forums.lcna.org/lfic>.

Developed by members of LC/NA, it shares the understanding of sanctuary held by Lutherans Concerned, namely: “The ministry of Lutherans

who may elsewhere experience alienation, distrust or rejection. For the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we welcome all people to this Sanctuary”

LFIC takes its inspiration from Galatians 5:1: “For freedom Christ has set us free,” and is designed so that “people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, race, ethnic origin, class or Lutheran denominational affiliation might have an opportunity to interact with supportive pastors and friends.”

There are public forums or discussion groups, as well as private ones restricted to registered members.

To protect the participants from unsupportive and possibly disruptive individuals, and to foster mutual trust, interested parties will be required to register, be vetted, then approved, before they are allowed see the content of the various forums and threads or to post. The use of fictional screen names is also strongly encouraged.

The hope is that this forum will begin to meet the needs of the many who live and work in fear of exposure and its possible consequences within their own churches and congregations. ▼

Extraordinary

continued from page 17

current policies have placed me and so many others in a ‘gray area’ of doing pastoral ministry without the recognition of and responsibility to the wider church.”

Salem English Lutheran Church... Another ELCA Congregation Acting Boldly

Salem English Lutheran Church is in the midst of transformation, seeking to authentically be in ministry in its neighborhood, to reach out beyond its walls, to strengthen and deepen the bonds of the existing faith community, and to understand and live its identity as God’s people empowered by the Holy Spirit. Salem is a Transformational Ministry site of the ELCA as well as Minneapolis Area Synod, receiving mission support and covenanting with the wider church to intentionally practice new and renewed ministry.

Rev. Nagel’s ordination and installation are just one step in the midst of a long process of change and renewal for Salem. Faced with a large and unsustainable city church building, on October 29, 2006, Salem held its final worship service in their facility at 28th Street and Lyndale Avenue on the edge of the Uptown area of Minneapolis. For a period, Salem is sharing the nearby facility of their ecumenical partner congregation, Lyndale United Church of Christ. Together Salem and Lyndale are planning for a sustainable and green-friendly ministry center on a portion of Salem’s property,

continued on next page

For freedom **Christ** has set us **free**. —Galatians 5:1

Concerned, its meetings and its mailing list are protected by our understanding of sanctuary. No participants need fear exposure or abuse in subscribing, joining or attending Lutherans Concerned events. All information which individuals may reveal about themselves is to be honored by others with total confidentiality. Mutual trust and respect, in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is offered to all

LGBT Welcoming Environments Seeking Staff Notices

Congregations or other Lutheran settings looking for rostered ministers or other paid staff to work in an LGBT welcoming environment may give notice of that through the LC/NA website, reinforced by a general notice in the *Concord*.

The website notice must come to us from a call committee, congregation council or president speaking for the council, or other appropriately authorized official.

The website notice should state the position, the organization, its location, a no-more-than 50-word description of the position or organization, a point of contact, and whether additional information is available on a website or through email.

The website notice submission must clearly state when it is to be taken down. Our website can obviously take down an entry on an almost daily basis. Notices without a take-down date will not be posted. Take-down dates can be extended or curtailed as necessary.

Notices, as well as extension or curtailment requests, should be sent to Jerry Vagts, grassroots@lcna.org.

The *Concord* will run a boxed notice simply drawing the attention of its readers to the website listings facility where the individual listings are found.

First Advanced I-Wheel® Training Event Equips Activists

By **Tim Fisher**, LC/NA Office Administrator

This past November, twenty-eight advocates for full inclusion gathered at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, to participate in LC/NA's first annual Advanced

Implications Wheel® Training Program. The two-day event drew participants from across the country and from many facets of the RIC community, including LC/NA Regional Coordinators, Lutheran Volunteer Corps leaders, LC/NA Board and Staff, congregation members, and clergy. Emily Eastwood conducted the training sessions with assistance from Troy Plummer and Jerry Vagts.

The Implications Wheel® (or "I-Wheel®" for short) is a decision-enhancing tool developed by Joel Barker that allows leaders and other interested folks to research the potential implications of a policy change, emerging trend, innovation, strategic goal, or an event. Congregations who are now RIC have used the I-Wheel® as a tool to help discern what it means to welcome all members of God's community. Many of the participants at the advanced training in St.

Paul were veterans of past RIC training events where the I-Wheel® method was introduced. The advanced training program equips participants to build on that introduction and take their skills on the road to lead I-Wheel® sessions for congregations as they consider becoming RIC.

The training in St. Paul provided "real world" experience in a number of ways. For example, participants had the opportunity to apply the I-Wheel® tool to a question important to the LC/NA community: "What are the implications for LC/NA if the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2009 eliminates the policy precluding 'practicing homosexuals' from rostered service?" The implications generated were diverse and fascinating and will undoubtedly prove to be helpful in shaping the mission of LC/NA in the years to come. In another instance, an opportunity for hands-on experience developed when participants from First Lutheran Church (St. Peter, Minn.) invited other participants to help facilitate an extensive I-Wheel® session at First Lutheran the very next weekend.

LC/NA looks forward to offering Advanced I-Wheel® Training as an annual event. If you have been to an RIC training event in the past, or if you simply have a strong interest in learning the I-Wheel® process, please consider attending a future advanced training. It's a great way to work for the full inclusion of LGBT people in the life of the church. ▼

Extraordinary

continued from previous page

with new development of retail and housing on the other portion.

"Salem is a welcoming church committed to Christ, our community, and the diversity of our neighborhood." This statement describes not only Salem's present mission, but also the spirit of its 118-year history. The congregation's full name, Salem English Lutheran Church, reflects the decision at the church's founding, that the people would worship in English, the language of the new neighborhood, rather than German or Swedish or Norwegian. Today, Salem still seeks to practice a ministry that is contextual, that speaks the Gospel language in ways that its diverse, urban neighborhood can hear and understand.

Salem's transformation is rooted deeply in the congregation's identity. In worship, the congregation speaks a lively diversity of

'languages,' with both a traditional service and a jazz service. In 2004, Salem became a Reconciling in Christ congregation, fully welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This welcome has become a stepping-stone toward a wider welcome that tries to cross lines of race, mental health, and social economic status. More and more people from the neighborhood are finding a place at Salem. Salem's ministry seeks to nurture the community now and plan for the congregation of the future.

Salem member Sarah Kunze had this to say about her congregation's call to Jen Nagel: "This ordination can and should be seen as a bold call for change in the Church, but it is also very specifically about the strength of Jen Nagel's pastoral ministry, and her unique gifts for leading Salem in honest, Spirit-led, transformational ministry."

Retired ELCA pastor and Salem member Rev. Roger Livdahl adds that, "Jen has

insights and gifts that make her uniquely qualified to give Salem leadership in our location of the city. We are inspired by her passion for ministry to poor and hungry people and others who are regarded as on the fringes of society." ▼

Note: Sources for this article include Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries' press release and the service bulletin for the ordination and installation of Pr. Nagel. For more information about Pr. Nagel's ordination and installation, including photos, the entire service bulletin and the Rev. Davis' sermon, go to www.discoversalem.com.

Correction

In the Winter 2007 issue of the *Concord*, in the continuation on page 11 of the article about LC/NA's commitment to anti-racism and the Multicultural Relations Committee, Emily Van Kley's name was misspelled—not through any fault of Rene Garcia, the writer, but somewhere in the process of the multiple edits the *Concord* undergoes. We welcome Emily joining the Multicultural Relations Committee to share her talents in this important work and regret the error.

Hearts on Fire, July 2–6, 2008 Tentative Schedule

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

8:00–12:00	Regional Coordinators Meet	Richmond Room
9:00–11:00	LC Board Meets	Presidio Room
10:00	Registration Open	Nob Hill Room
1:00–5:00	Pre–Events Session #1	Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Twin Peaks, Mt. Davidson, Coit Lounge, Presidio Room, Richmond Room, Sunset Room
5:00	Dinner	Dining Center
7:00–9:00	Pre–Events Session #2	Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Twin Peaks, Mt. Davidson, Coit Lounge, Presidio Room, Richmond Room, Sunset Room

Thursday, July 3, 2008

7:00	Breakfast	Dining Center (Overflow into Seven Hills)
8–11:00	Pre–Events Session #3	Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Twin Peaks, Mt. Davidson, Coit Lounge, Presidio Room, Richmond Room, Sunset Room
12:00	Registration Open	Nob Hill Room
12:00	Marketplace Open	Room #153
1:00	Choir Rehearsal	Creative Arts 146
2:00	Opening Worship	McKenna Theatre
3:30	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
4:00	Welcoming Comments	McKenna Theatre
4:30	LC/NA Business Session #1	McKenna Theatre
6:00	Dinner	Dining Center
7:30	Gathering Music	McKenna Theatre
7:45	Keynote #1 (Bp. Gene Robinson)	McKenna Theatre
9:15	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
9:30	Camp Out	McKenna Theatre
9:30	The Pursuit of Equality	Knuth Theatre
10:00	Marketplace Closed	Room #154

Friday, July 4, 2008

7:00	Support Groups (AA, NA, Alanon)	Telegraph Hill & Russian Hill
7:00	Breakfast	Dining Center
7:45	Gathering Music	McKenna Theatre
8:00	Bible Study	McKenna Theatre
8:45	Transition Music/Video	McKenna Theatre
9:00	Keynote #2 (Kelly Fryer)	McKenna Theatre
10:00	Marketplace Open	Room #153
10:30	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
10:45	Workshop #1	15 Classrooms in Fine Arts & Humanities
12:00	Lunch	Dining Center (Overflow into Seven Hills) (Affinity Groups in Towers)
1:30	Workshop #2	15 Classrooms in Fine Arts & Humanities
2:45	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
3:00	LC/NA Business Session #2	McKenna Theatre
4:30	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
5:10	Regional Caucuses	10 Classrooms in Fine Arts & Humanities

Friday, July 4, 2008 (continued)

6:30	Dinner	Dining Center (Overflow into Seven Hills)
7:00	Deadline for Resolutions	Marketplace
8:00	Worship (Healing & Reconciliation)	McKenna Theatre
9:30	Bread for the Journey Concert	McKenna Theatre
9:30	“For the Bible Tells Me So...”	Knuth Theatre
10:00	Marketplace Closed	Room #153

Saturday, July 5, 2008 Room

7:00	Support Groups (AA, NA, Alanon)	Telegraph Hill & Russian Hill
7:00	Breakfast	Dining Center
7:30	Marketplace Open	Room #153
7:45	Gathering Music	McKenna Theatre
8:00	Bible Study	McKenna Theatre
8:45	Transition Music/Video	McKenna Theatre
9:00	Keynote #3 (Bishop John Selders)	McKenna Theatre
10:30	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
11:00	I Love to Tell the Story Part 1	McKenna Theatre
11:45	Lunch	15 Classrooms in Fine Arts & Humanities
12:30	I Love to Tell the Story Part 2	15 Classrooms in Fine Arts & Humanities
4:00	Break	
4:30	LC/NA Business Session #3	McKenna Theatre
6:00	Silent Auction & Appetizers	Seven Hills Conference Center
6:30	Dinner	Dining Center (Overflow into Seven Hills)
8:00	Awards & Concert	McKenna Theatre
9:00	Reception w/ Dessert & Live Band	Jack Adams Hall

Sunday, July 6, 2006

7:00	Breakfast	Dining Center
7:45	Gathering Music	McKenna Theatre
8:00	LC/NA Business Session #4	McKenna Theatre
9:30	Choir Rehearsal	Creative Arts 146
10:00	Break	Refreshments in Classroom 153
10:30	Closing Worship (Festival)	McKenna Theatre
12:00	Farewell Lunch	Dining Center
1:00	LC/NA New Board Meets	Telegraph Hill & Russian Room
1:00	Check Out of Residence	Village Courtyard
	Luggage Holding Room	Village Building

*Are you the only **stranger** in Jerusalem who **does not know** the things that have taken place there in these days? ... The things about **Jesus of Nazareth**, who was a **prophet** mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.*

—Luke 18-19