

INSIDE

| | |
|---|----|
| From the Editor | 2 |
| From the Co-Chairs | 3 |
| From the Executive Director . . . | 4 |
| From the Deputy Director | 6 |
| RIC Corner | 7 |
| Speakers at Let Justice Roll . . . | 10 |
| Let Acclamations Roll | 13 |
| Worship at Let Justice Roll . . . | 14 |
| Newsfronts | 16 |
| Believe Out Loud | 17 |
| Notes from the International Program Committee | 17 |
| Seven ELM Pastors added to ELCA Roster | 18 |
| Regional Coordinators | 19 |
| ELCA Synod Assemblies 2010 . | 20 |

Our Logo

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

Statement of Sanctuary

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

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

Diversity and Anti-Racism

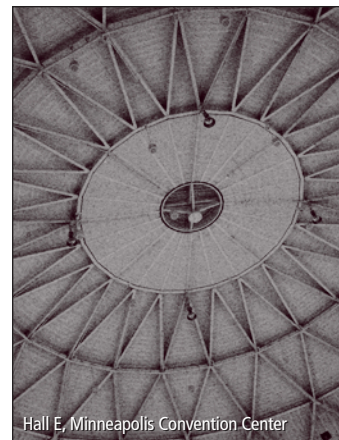
An equal-opportunity employer, LC/NA welcomes candidates for paid or volunteer positions who share our commitments to full participation for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and anti-racist accountability to communities of color.



Hoversten Chapel, Augsburg College



Central Lutheran, Minneapolis



Hall E, Minneapolis Convention Center

A Tale of Three Roofs

Under these roofs **wondrous things** happened

Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters (LJR), the recently completed biennial assembly of Lutherans Concerned/North America and national convention of the Reconciling in Christ program, can be seen as a tale of three roofs: the one over

the Hoversten Chapel, the second over Central Lutheran, the third of Hall E in the Minneapolis Convention Center.

More than 400 people attended the various pre-events, plenary sessions, workshops, worship, business meetings and entertainment during this July 7-11 gathering in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The second and third roofs we will cover in the article about the worship services that took place.

Hoversten Chapel is the meeting space at Augsburg College where the plenary sessions and business meetings, as well as all but one of the worship services, took place during *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters*. The entertainment sessions in the evenings also took place in Hoversten. The roof is a wooden structure, appropriately Trinitarian and well-lit, creating a warm, vaulted space for the activities taking place.

The business sessions of LJR took place on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the gathering. Constitutional changes were approved and resolutions brought forward for legislative action. The results of these can be found in this

issue of *Concord*.

A new board of directors was selected at LJR. Additional information about the new board members can be found at www.lcna.org. Returning members of the board are Len Weiser as Co-Chair, Rose Beeson now serving as a Co-Chair, Nicole García as Transgender Representative, Philip Moeller as International Programs Director and Pastor Rachel Mithelman, Chaplain. This is the youngest board LC/NA has ever had, a welcome aspect as LC/NA and the church look to the future, listening today to the voices of tomorrow. This new board is highly qualified for the roles and responsibilities it takes on in this time of transition for LC/NA and the church.

The structure of the board of directors was changed, with the blending of the Multicultural Relations and Full Inclusion Committees into the Committee for Working at the Intersection of Oppressions. This new committee will work at the very heart of what LC/NA's mission is, initially providing LC/NA education and assistance toward the adoption of policies,

continued on page 8

The Editor

DALE TRUSCOTT



"If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread... When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning... Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD... Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining... and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud." —EXODUS 16:3, 8 NRSV

As I reflect on the reports of the Assembly of Lutherans Concerned and the convention of the Reconciling in Christ program, I am, perhaps

for strange to understand reasons, drawn to the story of the Israelites trekking across the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. At each stage along the way, the tendency of the people of Israel is to want to stop and go no farther. They want to reminisce about the "fleshpots" of Egypt where, although enslaved by cruel masters, their bellies were full. They want to stop the journey and disparage the promised goal

slavery to racism and lack of civil rights for African Americans. I was ordained in the year that we crossed the Red Sea from refusing to ordain women to equal access to rostered ministry for men and women. In each case, what we entered when we were freed from enslavement to an injustice was not immediately the Promised Land. What we entered was the wilderness, a wilderness journey, which lasts a lifetime, a generation, "forty" years.

...left enslavement to a grave injustice, and... entered the generation of wilderness journey

of the land flowing with milk and honey. They want to cast blame upon the heroic leader, Moses, who steadfastly urged them on.

This epic story is, like so many great religious epics, a paradigm for the ongoing experience of the people of God. We, in the ELCA, have recently emerged from one of our periodic enslavements in Egypt and are now trekking across the wilderness toward another Promised Land. When I started my career in the church, we were just beginning to be freed from

Now the ELCA has affirmed the right of gay and lesbian rostered leaders to be monogamously partnered while in ministry. We have had our Passover dinner and have left enslavement to a grave injustice, and we have entered the generation of wilderness journey.

So, what happened with those Israelites in the wilderness? They grumbled about the relative comforts of the past. They worshipped a golden calf while Moses was up on the mountain achieving a new covenant with God. They

rebelled against the commandments he brought down. They complained about the menu God provided them for sustenance. And God got angry too, and, on several occasions, wanted to wipe them out for their stiff-necked resistance to God's will. And, yet, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron and others, they persevered and made it home. They crossed the proverbial Jordan that every epic story crosses, that every struggle for justice and freedom must cross.

Wasn't it easier when we Lutherans only had Germans and Scandinavians and Finns to be with? Wasn't it easier when our pastors were all men? Wasn't it easier when our worship services were all alike? Wasn't it easier when our national magazine told all agreeable stories? And wasn't it so much easier when we did not have to engage at all with those strange people on the fringe of society who we called after a word coined by Karl-Maria Kertbenyl in 1869, homosexual?

Moses spent those forty years leading the Israelites to a new understanding of who they were and whom they worshipped. What emerged was ethical monotheism or at least the beginning of it, the basis for the world's three great "western" religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. What will emerge from this newest wilderness journey upon which this church has embarked? Will we forge a new covenant with our God that will guide us into the future that will serve us in a new promised land? I believe we will.

Israel made it through the desert and emerged a people of God, just about all of them including the grumblers. Under new and continuing leadership with new identity and treasured memories, in a new relationship with the church that we have striven to serve all along, Lutherans Concerned/ North

continued on page 3

Publication Information

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

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

LC/NA Staff

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

LC/NA Board of Directors

Co-Chair: Rose Beeson rose@lcna.org
Co-Chair: Len Weiser len@lcna.org
Vice Chair: Jane Austin vicechair@lcna.org
Secretary: Karen Jolly secretary@lcna.org
Treasurer: Jim Morrell treasurer@lcna.org
Director of Communications: Adam Bost
communications@lcna.org
Co-Directors of Committee Working at the Intersection of Oppressions:
Judy Griffin intersections@lcna.org
Darryl Kiehl intersections@lcna.org
Director of International Programs:
Philip Moeller international@lcna.org
Canada Representative: Everett Freeman
canada@lcna.org
Bisexual Representative: Olivia-Beth Horak
bi@lcna.org
Transgender Representative: Nicole Garcia
trans@lcna.org
Youth Representative: Rachel Nelson
youthrep@lcna.org
Chaplain: Rev. Rachel Thorson Mithelman
chaplain@lcna.org

Editorial

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

ISSN 0741-98 72

Co-Chairs

ROSE BEESON
LEN WEISER



**"Therefore encourage one another
and build up each other"**
—1 Thessalonians 5:11 **NRSV**

What does "justice" mean? How do we seek justice for others? How do we accept justice when it comes falling, crashing down upon our heads?

At the five day LC/NA biennial assembly *Let Justice Roll* we were challenged: by the keynote presenters, our Bible Study leader, and the resolution for continuing education, advocacy and support for those whose sexuality or gender identity places them on the margins of our predominantly gay and lesbian community, to consider, now that we are in the Church, what does "justice" look like? How do we respond when the finger is pointed at us and we realize that we are the ones who are unjust?

... what does **justice** look like?

The words from 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore encourage one another and build up each other," provide a vision for the way the church could be; they provide a challenge for each of us to reach past our boundaries, to reconsider our very human way of being on the "inside" by making someone else be "outside." They challenge us to speak well of people with whom we may strongly disagree.

In LC/NA's vision for the church, found on our website, we write of a Church "freed by God's grace" that integrates "sexuality and spirituality, justice and mercy" a Church that welcomes all "in holiness and into wholeness" to co-create a "world without outcasts, calling all to serve as guests and hosts at God's table of blessing and power." With these words we enunciate a lofty vision, a place where all are strengthened for authentic, visible, faithful lives; we write of a place of shared power, where some of us give it up to enable others to receive it; we write of a place where the gifts and skills of all are encouraged and the personhood of everyone is upheld. It is the ultimate challenge and it is where we are called as part of the Church.

We rejoice that, with the overturning of the discriminatory policy last year and current work drafting a "Message on Human Disabilities", the

ELCA has moved closer to the vision of a welcoming church, and we remember our siblings in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) who have posted a "Proposed ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality" on their website. The Proposed ELCIC statement is significantly shorter than the ELCA statement and acknowledges the complexity and diversity in ways which people identify: "We live in a world aware of orientations other than heterosexual. Simple categories of 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' do not describe the lived experience of some people. People use a variety of words to describe their own identity and reality, including: straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirited, queer, transgendered, intersexed, and questioning. These identity markers vary with time and place." (p. 4, *Proposed ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality*). The comment period on this draft social statement ended on August 31, 2010. We know that members of the ELCIC read the statement and submitted feedback before the end of August.

With these events, and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's (LCMS) July 15th decision to continue cooperative work with the ELCA, despite disagreement over matters of human sexuality, we move into a new era.

This movement I think was captured by some of the comments I overheard at Let Justice Roll. "The assembly was awesome!" "So many of the people here are younger than I thought they would be!" "I'm so excited, it isn't just about us anymore, but about what we can do for the Church!" With these comments in mind, we, the incoming board, give thanks to the outgoing 2008–2010 board, and our amazing office staff, for navigating and steering LC/NA through an incredibly difficult biennium that encompassed a major economic recession, illness of our Executive Director, and the excitement of changing a policy we have struggled against for more than 20 years. As we begin to prepare for ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2011, 2011 ELCIC National Convention, and ReconcilingWorks – the LC/NA biennial assembly in 2012, we are called and commanded to realize that we are no longer outside the church – but WE THE CHURCH have a lot of work to do! ▼

From the Editor

continued from page 2

America has entered a new wilderness journey along with all the rest of the Lutheran Christians in America, and people everywhere for that matter. For us Lutherans it will be a journey to discover who we have become by our decisions and to be who we have decided to be, an inclusive people guided by justice and God's love. ▼

Executive Director

EMILY EASTWOOD



It was two years ago that the staff of LC/NA and I sat down on a sunny afternoon with artist Jim Dryden to talk through the biennial theme for 2008–2010, *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters*. We gathered around his table of hospitality surrounded by lovely gardens and bubbling pools. We shared the passage of scripture from the Book of Amos, we dreamt of God's justice waters, bestowed at creation and in our baptism, bringing new life to a world parched and longing for freedom from oppression. We claimed our responsibility as God's hands reaching to each other and all creation in love, acting for justice, peace and reconciliation. Jim listened as he always does, in peaceful but rapt attention. He took our words and feelings about the two-year journey ahead, the hopes, the faith, the dreams in the face of the unknowable, and shaped them into beautiful images on a piece of finely grained wood.

no doubt in my mind that justice is rolling, not from a single source, but from many bubbling springs which have become unstoppable rivers of change.

In so many ways, we were more than ready for these rolling waves. In other ways, though, we are surprised at their speed, the impact on our lives, and the sudden rushes of joy accompanied unbidden with an unleashing anew of the pain of the past. For many of us who are 20- to 40- or even 50-year veterans of the Lutheran movement for full participation these are complicated times. Some of us bear the marks of the church's destructive oppression in our very selves. Vocations, families, and faithful lives were sacrificed on the altar of institutional preservation. Some of us went away, quietly suffering alone, losing faith. Some of us stayed, choosing to work for change from within. Others chose silent endurance. God continued to call. Prophets answered, not always welcome in their own homes. Congregations were expelled. Others came forward to call. Public witness and resistance to the policies of exclusion continued unabated for twenty years. We honor those who answered their calls in this way. We also honor those who were called to work tirelessly from within using the strategy of graceful engagement to meet Lutherans where they were, walking toward the future together with a persistent witness of peace and the building of relationships across ideological and theological lines. We welcome the silent who endured. We bless the memory of those who did not live to see this new day. The price of justice was steep, very steep. But then, it always is.

And now, as justice is rolling down like waters, who will we be, how will we be? While our struggle cannot compare to the atrocities of apartheid, I hope that we will take a clue from the intent of Mandela's South Africa, choosing truth and reconciliation over anger and division. I believe that the historic test of our legacy as LC/NA comes now in this turbulent time of turning as much as, if not more than, in our work over the last 36 years or the last eight. Our mission is clear. Our time horizon: the next 40 years. Justice was not achieved at Churchwide 2009, but justice is surely coming.

In the 2010–2012 biennium we will honor the sacrifices of the past without being paralyzed by them. We will explore vocation in new ways, raising up and supporting leaders both for LC/NA and the church we love. We will collaborate both intra-denominationally and ecumenically, each opportunity tested against our mission. We will delight in the entrepreneurial nature of the Holy Spirit which is creating bubbling springs of reconciling activity with new ideas in places we never imagined. We will deepen the work of reconciliation at the individual, congregational, organizational, synodical, churchwide, ecumenical and global levels. We will organize people and money to create the change we seek, turning policy to practice within church and society. We will challenge ourselves to

We claimed our **responsibility** as **God's** hands

As we sat together that day we had no concrete idea of what it would be like when justice did start rolling down like waters. Now as I write, it is just one day after a federal court struck down California's Proposition 8 as unconstitutional and Mexico's Supreme Court has upheld same-sex marriage in Mexico City. We are less than two weeks past the Sunday when seven extraordinary LGBT pastors were received/reinstated to the official roster of the ELCA and St. Francis Lutheran voted to begin the

process for reinstatement to the roster of ELCA congregations, four weeks from our own biennial assembly and RIC conference coincident with the decisions of the Presbyterian Church USA to study same-gender marriage, offer benefits to same-gender spouses of church employees, and send a vote to abolish the ban on clergy in same-gender relationships to their presbyteries for ratification, and finally less than a month from another federal court decision ruling unconstitutional the Defense of Marriage Act. There is

RIC Settings

Added to the Roster since last issue

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, New York
 Central Lutheran Church, Eugene, Oregon
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
 King of Kings Lutheran Church, Milwaukie, Oregon
 Lutheran Church of the Cross, Victoria, British Columbia
 Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut
 St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ithaca, New York

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

work at the intersection of oppressions, seeking justice for all, not just us. We will spread the Good News of God's love and saving grace in Jesus Christ.

We are ready for this *kairos* time when opportunity abounds. We know what is needed and how to move ahead, always reflective of and reactive to a rapidly changing context. In order to maximize momentum and missional output, catching the current movement wave, we must renew and adjust our focus on development: organizing people and money to create change. The Believe Out Loud Power Summit (Oct 2010), Teaching Theologians Roundtable (July 2010), LGBT Ministerium Meeting (July 2010), ongoing Reconciling Lutherans project, and coming RIC Trainings (see schedule in this issue) have all been designed to organize, support, educate and inspire action. The organizing "people" part is visibly in motion.

As of July 1, development, organizing money, became the major component of my portfolio. You may think I'm nuts, but I asked for it, saying that after a year and a half of serious illness, I wanted to do the fun stuff. Fortunately for me, no one else on the staff thinks fundraising is fun. I do. Though I've been told by a former opponent I could sell snow shoes in Phoenix, development is not so much about persuasion as it is about deep listening, a clear articulation of our mission and finding where a donor's passions and our mission coincide. Donors are pumped about full inclusion. So is Lutherans Concerned. As am I. Happy coincidence.

We have contracted with Fox Consulting here in Minneapolis to do a feasibility study for a second major donor campaign. Jane Austin has joined our board as Vice-Chair Fundraising and Development. She brings an impressive resume in both communications and development portfolios. The LC/NA staff, Jane, and new Communications Director, Adam Bost, are working to dovetail the feasibility study with a grant-funded communications audit by Lightbox Consulting. Development and communications go hand in hand. You who are donors need to know what's happening, the good and the not so good of it, through the communication means you use most. Donations, large and small, help us continue the work; \$5, \$10, \$25 mount up, particularly if they can be regular gifts, recurring every month or quarter. Larger donations are equally valued. You know best what you are able to do.

Organizing money will take a number of



forms as different folks like different ways to give:

- Memberships, which were the largest base of giving prior to 2001, still provide an easy entry to LC/NA. Contributing, Sustaining and Lifetime Membership offer ways to upgrade member support.
- Evergreen Giving, a monthly, quarterly, or annual automated giving program is key to the support of general expenses, like payroll, benefits, office rental, etc. A number of folks signed up for Evergreen Giving at Let Justice Roll. In this biennium we hope to expand this program dramatically.
- Quarterly appeals bring members up to speed on what's new and needed between *Concord* newsletters.
- A new major donor campaign will launch this fall or early winter, with specific funding objectives driven by our changing context and emerging time horizons.
- Foundation funding continued through the recession, for which we are most thankful. Grant writing will continue for special projects as well as general operating support.
- Finally, development includes working with donors on planned giving. The progress of the last eight years was kicked off by a single bequest from Clarence "Andy" Anderson. I think he would be pleased with the return on his investment.

At the end of *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters*, Ross Murray, newly appointed Deputy Director, unveiled the theme for the 2010–2012 biennium and the Jim Dryden painting: ReconcilingWorks. The turbulent

nature of the present is captured in a bit of the tornado from that day a year ago at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly when the winds of the Spirit blew through the convention hall making a way where there had been no way. The descending dove flies above a heart with a fish at its center. God's love, our love, our storied pasts intertwined with that of the early Christians shaped by the need for sanctuary and the call to evangelism. The three hands represent Advocacy, Education and Support; our hands, God's work. The crossing arcs represent our intent to work at the intersection of oppressions.

Reconciling does work. In fact, it works wonders. But reconciling is work, hard work, sometimes messy work. We do this work not to achieve salvation, for we received the promise of eternal life in our baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Rather, we do this work because God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to God through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." ▼

Upcoming Trainings on Building an Inclusive Church

Sept. 24–26, 2010
Spokane, Washington
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2010
New York City, New York
Marble Collegiate Church

Nov. 5–7, 2010
Chicago, Illinois
Location TBA

Nov. 12–14, 2010
Houston, Texas
Grace Lutheran Church

Nov. 19–21, 2010
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation

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

Deputy Director

ROSS MURRAY



So, What Now? It's over, right?

Probably the biggest question people are asking me is, "Now that policy change in the ELCA has been achieved, what is LC/NA going to do next?" The organization needs to shift from its focus on changing ELCA policy to a focus that deepens and expands the work of full participation throughout the Lutheran Communion. Policy change in the ELCA was an important milestone, but it was just that, a milestone...not the goal. Our mission is full participation, and until full participation is a lived reality throughout the Lutheran communion, and beyond, there is still work to do.

Our focus now shifts further down the road to work in three areas.

Expand and Deepen Reconciling in Christ

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) led us to policy change, and will sustain the policy change. Currently there are 465 RIC settings across North America, including 25 synods, two colleges, and two seminaries. While this is a great expansion of the program from eight years ago, it is a drop in the bucket compared to the 10,000 congregations in the ELCA, the 600 congregations in

the ELCIC, the 6,000 congregations in the LC-MS, the 1,200 congregations in WELS, or any of the other Lutheran denominational bodies out there.

The ELCA policy change created an opportunity, both wonderful and concerning. People who have felt alienated from organized religion because of religious homophobia may hear about the policy in the ELCA and decide they want to try a Lutheran church to fill their spiritual needs. They may wander into the first Lutheran church they find and expect to be welcomed and accepted by all people within the congregation. We need to work to make sure that their chances of walking into a welcoming congregation are increased. Right now, the odds they will be disappointed in their welcome are much higher than we want. It will take more conversation, more faithful reference to scripture, more storytelling, and more education, but the evangelical opportunities created through the RIC process will be worth the effort!

We also need to deepen what RIC means. RIC is designed to be an ongoing process, not a status. The intention is that RIC settings move from an initial statement of welcome to a deeper understanding of justice, full participation, and welcoming. RIC welcome statements don't refer to blessings of committed same-gender relationships, or the calling of pastors in such relationships. We will engage with current RIC congregations about their openness to blessings and calling clergy. We currently identify RIC congregations willing to perform blessings. We will indicate congregations who are open to calling qualified pastors in same-gender relationships. Our work together will ensure that full participation means the vocational and relational choices of LGBT

"In Honor of..."

In Honor of...

Honored by...

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Paul & Margot Andress | In honor of Paul & Margot Andress | Elizabeth Andress |
| Joe Brown | In memory of Joe Brown | Mike Crandall |
| Joanie Curtin | In honor of Joanie Curtin | Lore M. Dickey, M.A. |
| Daniel Fujimoto | In memory of Daniel Fujimoto | Deanna, Bennie, Kevin, and Kathie Badgett |
| Richard Garnett & Ross Murray | In honor of Richard Garnett & Ross Murray | Peggy Manatad |
| Bishop Ed Hansen | In memory of Bishop Ed Hansen (ALC) 1917–2009—a Reconciling Lutheran in every way | Lee Anne Lack, Shirley Hansen, Linda Hansen |
| Karen Hanson & Kathleen Fjelstul | In honor of the 25-year partnership of Karen Hanson & Kathleen Fjelstul | Roger Sween |
| Robert Joppa | In honor of Robert Joppa's MBA graduation | Marti Scheel |
| Marie Kent | In memory of Marie Kent, one of the founders of Lutherans Concerned | Jean Huffey Rev. Barbara Lundblad & Nicole Johnson |
| Kathe King & Dave Eitland | In honor of Kathe King & Dave Eitland | John Stoltenberg & Joe Hamilton |
| Annette Luther | In memory of Annette Luther | Joyce Peltzer & Sandra Aronen |
| Lauren & Michelle Morse-Wendt | In honor of the wedding of Lauren & Michelle Morse-Wendt | Jonathan Flak & Cheryl Persigehl |
| Hans Petersen | In memory of Hans Petersen | David Weasley |
| Mary Peterson & Mary Beth Weaver | In honor of the marriage of Mary Peterson & Mary Beth Weaver | Karen & Paul Jolly |
| Dale Truscott and Kin Xuxa | In recognition of the work of Dale Truscott and Kin Xuxa | The Jennifer M. Lee and Jeffrey S. Chapski Family Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund |
| Caroline Vagts | In memory of Caroline Vagts | Shirley Gangstad |

people are affirmed and encouraged as are those of all Lutherans.

Policy into Practice

Turning “policy into practice” is the continuation of achieving policy change. We need to inspire, cultivate, and raise up leaders in all levels of the Church who understand and can articulate full participation. “Leaders” means much more than just clergy. The committees and councils at all levels of the church: churchwide, synod, and congregation, need people who can imagine how the ministries of the church reach out to those on the margins and bring them into the center. What is necessary is that justice-minded people convinced of full participation step forward to offer service and voice within the church.

This extends to all aspects of the life of the church. Full participation has implications for candidacy committees, evangelism committees, racial justice committees, and for every committee. By encouraging every committee to understand and practice full participation, we make ministry a much fuller, richer reality for all people.

Seeking to continue to grassroots work we have begun will require a renewal of commitment and effort. Understanding the diversity in the structure of the church and within synods and congregations is a necessary component of increasing the diversity within the church in its committees and councils. This is an effort that requires both education to achieve understanding and the courage to volunteer for service by those who understand and value full inclusion.

Creating Change in the World

It is wisely said that it is not justice if it is “just us.” Justice for those already in our churches will mean nothing if there is no justice out in the wider world. Lutherans understand justice as part of their work on poverty, hunger, violence, abuse, education, racial equality, and freedom to worship. We must raise our Lutheran voices to speak out for full participation in the larger society, as well as the church. This means organizing members, supporters, chapters, and RIC

Graceful engagement, faithful references to Scripture, one-on-one conversations, and getting our stories heard

congregations to speak out on public policy supporting LGBT people: marriage rights in states, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The church must speak out on these subjects as well. This is particularly important given that dominant religious voices heard until now have been opposed to such equality and protection for LGBT people. It is time for us to speak out as Lutherans who support full participation. Graceful engagement, faithful references to Scripture, one-on-one conversations, and getting our stories heard have worked to achieve fuller participation in the ELCA; in the same way, we Lutherans can engage the larger society for the good of all.

We are already seeing our faithful impact on society. A recent study concluded that one-in-four Californians report that their views on rights for gay and lesbian people have become more supportive over the last five years, compared to only eight percent who say they have become more opposed.

Religious voices are the most influential and dynamic in conversations around marriage, particularly given the recent ruling that Proposition 8 in California was unconstitutional.

Affirming religious voices are also being listened to much more than they were in the past. In April, I was fortunate to attend a Washington, DC, meeting of the Bishops & Elders Council, a gathering of Christian LGBT leaders. We met with Joshua DuBois and Briand Bond, senior White House staff

members. We expressed our desire to address issues that face the LGBT community. We also met with a couple of staff people from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to talk about housing issues facing the LGBT community. The White House staff is very interested in working with us on areas of mutual interest. Just last week, I participated in a conference call with Hilde Solis, the Secretary of Labor. She wanted to share a new administrative interpretation of the Family Medical Leave Act that will have a positive effect on same-gender couples with children. She also took questions from us about what other issues the Department of Labor could be addressing. Our faithful work is rising up beyond our denomination, into the wider society.

However, we also must work to help secure basic protections for LGBT people and families around the globe. Most of us in North America have no idea of the struggles

continued on page 12

R I C C O R N E R

RIC ideas shared at Let Justice Roll

Let Justice Roll provided workshops, keynote addresses, fellowship, and splendid worship. In and around those activities, RIC congregations gathered by region and exchanged ideas. A handful of those ideas follows. For others, contact the regional director in your area..

- Meet with your synod, at the synod council level if possible, to work for recognition of LCNA at the synodical level, or- if your synod already has this recognition- to propose ways in which

Lutherans Concerned and your RIC congregations can be helpful to the synod.

- Participate in your nearest Pride events, marching, staffing a booth, preparing information on your RIC congregations, distributing water...many possibilities.
- Offer to work with your synod on justice issues such as Safe Schools and preparing legislation against hate crimes; offer to help promote evangelism opportunities within the LGBTQ community and in the general population among those who care about justice.

- Offer to serve within your synod as members of panel discussions or as individuals to meet with congregations considering withdrawing from the ELCA in order to provide a balance to CORE activities.
- Make connections with PFLAG, including offering to train PFLAG members in storytelling
- Support legislation against discriminatory laws, including letter writing to newspapers and to the legislators.

A Tale of Three Roofs

continued from page 1

structures and materials which dismantle our own participation in oppression based on class, race, age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability. A second step will be to develop strategic initiatives and materials using graceful engagement from within to further the acceptance of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in all Lutheran communities, including communities of color.

Other changes in titles and roles involved the top executive leadership of LC/NA. Ross Murray, hired initially to be an Associate Director, and recently appointed as Interim Executive Director during the medical absence of Emily Eastwood, was promoted to Deputy Director. Emily Eastwood returned from medical leave on July 8 to a part-time basis as she continues her recovery to full health and vigor. Emily

over those years, enabling the deepening and sustaining of the effort. Staffing positions, volunteer and paid, were firmed up; systems were put in place; outreach and education increased. There are now 414 congregations, 26 synods, 21 ELCA organizations, 2 seminaries, and 2 colleges/universities that are part of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program. Storytelling and graceful engagement training has 557 graduates who can pass the skill on. Building an Inclusive Church has conducted training for 758 people who are now capable of increasing the number of RIC settings.

The results of the 2009 and 2010 synod assembly seasons are illustrative of what happens when the message of understanding based on theological and biblical support is received and accepted. Even when we failed to pass resolutions favoring or to prevent the passage of those antithetical to full inclusion, the votes were closer and closer, indicating a widening understanding.

We will continue the work through attendance at synod assemblies and the 2011 ELCA and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada national gatherings, through “glocal” events (local events that have a global reach) and through local grassroots efforts to reach more people with the message of full inclusion.

Ross exhorted us to tell people of our Lutheran faith in Christ, tell people of our pride to be a Lutheran in the ELCA, tell people of our belief in full inclusion.

Emily spoke of the influence of development and finances on the work. The economic downturn has hindered the work of full inclusion. People are less able to commit their resources to the work they are passionate about because of the terrible damage done to the nation’s and their own economy by the reckless and unregulated actions of a few.

Our sources of revenue are memberships, pledges, responses to appeals, major donors, grants, resource sales/services. We have been inspired by the dedication and passion that people have shown as they continued to send in resources in the midst of their own difficulties. Notwithstanding, however, the effect of the downturn has been real. Temporarily, we have been able to offset the downturn in other donations by donations in the form of grants as the recession and chronic under- or unemployment wreaked havoc in the lives of people.

Grants from various sources, organizations that have seen the work that we do, the success we have had, and wish to support full inclusion, have increased in the last two years. Emily said that we would continue to seek grants to fund specific projects.

Emily said that we wanted to move to the steady-state giving represented by Evergreen Giving. With Evergreen Giving, the same amount is automatically donated through a credit card or funds withdrawn from your bank account each month. You are completely in charge and changing the amount donated is easy should you wish.

Tell of our **Lutheran faith in Christ**, ... our pride to be a Lutheran. ...our belief in **full inclusion**

said that Ross’s extensive managerial skills, grasp of the strategic nature of the continuing work of LC/NA, and underlying theological understanding, passion and long-term commitment to full inclusion made this promotion an important step in carrying the work forward.

Emily and Ross presented what has come to be known as the “state of the movement” over the course of two of the business sessions. Ross spoke of “The Movement Moment”— he reminded everyone of the classic definition of what a movement does, whether it engages in justice work to right wrongs, in

spiritual work to move the church to make the body of Christ more inclusive so the church more closely mirrors the message of Christ, or in work to increase the use of seat belts to reduce injuries and fatalities. Movements act with incremental goals leading to major milestone goals; they build infrastructure; they provide all with their vision.

Certainly the efforts conducted in connection with the churchwide assemblies from 2005–2009 are an example, each with the goal of aiding people in the prayerful and thoughtful consideration of full inclusion, moving more of them to understand and support it. Lessons were learned, each time, even in failure, so that gains were made, people were reached, understanding was increased.

Infrastructure has been built

Ross Murray



Emily lifted up Reconciling Lutherans as a truly grassroots-level way of showing our commitment to and public affirmation of our personal stance on full inclusion. Reconciling Lutherans is the individual counterpart to the Reconciling in Christ program for congregations and organizations. Sign up as a Reconciling Lutheran, if you belong to an RIC congregation or setting or not. Encourage

others. Check the listing for support in your locale.

Edina Community Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota provided an example of how to organize to increase the participation in Reconciling Lutherans. They put information in their Sunday bulletin, then they put an insert in the bulletin and then they set up computers in the narthex, using their youth group as data

entry specialists - the result was a huge number of Reconciling Lutherans taking a stand.

Emily reminded us that we are a mission-driven organization using grassroots organizing to create change. We are an organization working at the intersection of oppressions. ▼

LC/NA Assembly 2010 Legislation.

Constitutional Amendments Passed by the LC/NA Assembly 2010

Article II: Organization

Section 1: Membership

- A. A person who subscribes to the purposes and goals of this corporation becomes a member upon ~~(application to the Board of Directors and upon payment of the first annual dues. Membership will ordinarily involve affiliation with a Chapter.)~~ **submission of a completed membership form including payment of the first annual dues.** Members not affiliated with a Chapter will be listed as Unchaptered Members. The Board of Directors may make provision for alternative forms of membership.
- B. In addition to members as provided for in Article II, Section 1, Subsection A above, the Board of Directors may ~~(nominate)~~ **elect** by consensus, ~~(and the Assembly may elect by consensus.)~~ suitably qualified individuals as Honorary Lifetime Members of Lutherans Concerned / North America. These individuals shall be people who, in the judgment of the Board of Directors [and the Assembly], have made outstanding contributions in time and talents to promoting the purpose of Lutherans Concerned / North America as described in Article I, Section 2 above. Honorary Lifetime Members shall not be required to pay dues to Lutherans Concerned / North America and shall be placed and perpetually retained on the mailing list.

Section 2: Chapters

A Chapter shall meet the following requirements:

- A Chapter shall be a geographically based group of at least five members who ask for and receive authorization from the ~~(Board of Directors)~~ **office** to become a Chapter, provided the requirements here designated are met.
- A Chapter shall maintain regularly elected leadership, the nature of which shall be determined by said Chapter.
- A Chapter shall maintain a schedule of regular activities for the purpose of pursuing the goals of the corporation as defined in this Constitution.

If any of the above specified requirements subsequently fail to be met by a Chapter, the Board of Directors has the authority to rescind Chapter status.

Resolution 01-2010: Annual Funding for International Programs Committee

Submitted by: The International Programs Committee, LC/NA (Philip Moeller, IPC Chair; and Represented by Marti Scheel and Leo Treadway at Assembly 2010)

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that LC/NA will designate up to \$5,000 during Budget Year 2010–11 to support the global mission work of the LC/NA International Programs Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in current and future financial development campaigns that "Global Missions" be promoted and established as an area of "designated giving," as a means for providing future financial support to the International Programs Committee in each budget year; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the International Programs Committee provide a report to each Assembly, and to LC/NA chapters, through "The Concord," to demonstrate the effectiveness of their global mission work, and as a prequel to requests for additional funding support for expanded ministry activities.

Action: Referred by Consensus to the 2010–12 Board of Directors for consideration

Resolution 02-2010: Renewal of LC/NA's Commitment to Achieving Full Inclusion

Submitted by: Nicole Garcia, Galen Smith, Jay Wilson, Connie Monson, Karen Mathiasen, Jamie Ann Meyers, Leo Treadway and Sue Dorumsgaard

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that LC/NA will commit to providing a variety of training opportunities on creating a welcome for bisexual, transgender and all people affected by binary gender based oppression including:

- Training for Leadership (including Board, Staff and Regional Coordinators)
- Developing an additional curriculum to be used with congregations and as part of the Building an Inclusive Church training
- Developing a national speakers bureau of bisexual, transgender and queer speakers who are qualified to present trainings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LC/NA intentionally provide for separate gathering spaces for people who identify as bisexual, queer, transgender, gender-queer, intersex, Two-Spirit and culturally-specific gender/sexual identities, and other specific identities at assemblies, trainings and other meeting spaces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LC/NA will work with the Goodsoil legislative team and transgender, bisexual, and queer communities to consider drafting resolutions for Synod and Churchwide Assemblies that expand the welcome of the ELCA to include bisexual, transgender and all people affected by binary gender based oppression; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LC/NA will continue its commitment to intersectional anti-oppression by working to change the culture of LC/NA and our societies and communities toward viewing and opposing the oppressions of sexism, gender normativity and binary structures as oppressive to people of all gender identities and sexual orientations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED LC/NA will make a firm commitment to support, encourage, include, and outreach to people most vulnerable to multiple oppressions tied to gender-based oppression, including sexual-diverse and gender-diverse people including: youth, elders, people living in communities where oppression is concentrated, and people of color.

Action: Passed by Consensus

Resolution 03-2010: Establishment of a Scholarship Fund for Seminarians

Submitted by: Seminary Affinity Group (Rose Beeson, Luke Williams, and Paul Gibson)

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that LC/NA establish a scholarship fund for LGBT Lutheran seminarians; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that LC/NA make provisions to raise funds for the scholarships.

Action: Referred to LC/NA Board pending further conversation with LC/NA's partner organizations.

Resolution 04-2010: We Have Thanks Like a River

Submitted by Reference and Counsel (Jayne Thompson, Rene Garcia, Jason Chesnut, Olivia-Beth Horak)

[In rhyming verse, the resolution humorously thanked for their efforts: Emily Eastwood; Ross Murray; Rev. Luke Smetters; Gladys Moore; Len Weiser; Lissa Messner; Ben Refling; Tim Fisher; Brett Bowman; Augsburg College; Award Recipients: Bishop Herb Chilstrom and his wife Corine, June Kjome, Jerry Vagts, Phil Soucy; those who led the workshops; Chaplains: Rev. Lura Groen, Matt James, Rev. Jay Wiesner; Keynote Speakers: Miguel de la Torre, Mary Lowe, Jeremy Posadas; and all those who attended the assembly.]

Action: Passed by Consensus and the Singing of the Resolution by those assembled

Speakers at Let Justice Roll Down Like Water Light Up the Assembly Theme

Miguel de la Torre, Mary Lowe and Jeremy Posadas each approached the theme of God's justice in different, unique but complimentary ways. They brought light from scripture and from the perspective of those marginalized to this poignant moment in the struggle of LGBTQ people.

Miguel de la Torre's central theme was that scripture must be seen from the point of view of the marginalized in order to ensure that God's message is not focused through a lens of those with societal power. God's message is always about the least among us. God's messengers are chosen from among the downtrodden, the marginalized, and those of lesser stature: fishermen, tax collectors, the reluctant, the fearful, and the oppressed. Those sent to tell God's truth to power rarely possessed any authority in the dominant society.

He told us of a friend from his youth, "Tommy," who was gay, Southern Baptist, and wanted more than anything else to not be gay and live free of what the church said was sin of homosexuality. Despite all of his prayers and work and giving over to God, Tommy remained gay. Tommy had been taught to read the Bible through the eyes of an oppressor, whose sincerity of belief, nice god-fearing people that they were, did not prevent them from perpetuating the notion that what was normative for them must be normative for everyone – theirs being the only way God intended it to be.

For the last 2000 years, patriarchal understanding has created a multitude of oppressive structures that serve to marginalize those viewed as being less

powerful: other races, other classes, women, children, the alien. To interpret scripture one must carefully avoid both very conservative and very liberal readings of the text, so as to avoid error.

De la Torre said that heterosexuality must examine itself for evidence of oppression, for evidence of establishing structures

that, consciously or otherwise, preserve the power of men to subjugate all those believed to be weaker, in the name of "protecting them." Heterosexuality must take up homosexuality as a subject, not as an object. Heterosexuality should seek the voices of homosexuality since only homosexuals have direct experience of their point of view.

De la Torre pointed out that it seemed that for heterosexuality it was not sufficient to "closet" homosexuals. Rather it sought to supplant the self-image of homosexuals with one that sees homosexuality through the eyes of heterosexuals, so that homosexuals see themselves as abominations. And he observed that rather than finding natural allies among others marginalized by the dominant society, minority communities of all types had internalized false walls that separate their oppression from the oppressions experienced by others. This produced cul de sacs of oppression that work to the advantage of the oppressors.

He also admonished that the oppressed can be oppressors themselves: there can be "homophobic Hispanics and racist gays." We must examine ourselves for evidence of oppressing. We must venture between the cul-de-sacs to help others who are oppressed. The justice that flows from God is for all creation, not just our particular group. "When we cry out for justice to flow down like waters and righteousness to flow like an everlasting stream, we must move away from the mindset that assumes that our particular disenfranchised community is the only recipient of this flowing justice."

De la Torre said that the Christian church needs to hear the voices of those who are LGBT and all other marginalized communities, because, when the Bible is read from the social location of those the society privileges, the risk exists that interpretations designed to protect their power and privileges will be constructed.

He observed that, unfair as it may sound, those in favor of full inclusion are called to be witnesses of graceful reconciliation, to go to those who oppress and speak the truth. It is how God has always worked, choosing those from among the margins of society to be agents for change – the stones that the builder has rejected. God's message of salvation comes from the most unlikely sources.

Miguel de la Torre is Professor of Social Ethics at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado.

Mary Lowe, in a keynote address delivered the next day, said that, starting with de la Torre's point about viewing the Bible from the perspective of the margins, there was a case to be made for the gifts that would come to the church from understanding the view point of the marginalized.

She spoke of the word "queer" as having two senses, one of being and the other of doing. As being, queer indicated simply the failure to fit precisely within a category. She observed that all of us, at one time or another, have felt discomfort at being bound





by an imposed category that supposedly contained that which identified us. As to doing, “to queer” has the meaning to disrupt, to get in the way of, to interfere – which can be for good or ill.

Lowe said that queer can be to ask questions from a different perspective and reminded us that we followed someone who did that: Martin Luther.

She talked about liberating people from gender stereotypes, so that the dualism of masculine and feminine is no longer seen as that of inborn essences. Many important researchers working in the fields of biology, medical science, genetics and psychology no longer hold with the essentialist view that what someone appears as is what they are. She held to the view that masculine and feminine are found in all aspects of people and change with the situation, with their positions relative to others. Value, therefore, is to be found in prizing relationships over identity.

She said that by rejecting essentialism, the binary view, it was possible for a genuine welcome to be extended to LGBT people. Sometimes it is as simple as slightly altering what is said or asked. Churches, for instance, could gather people around affinities (interests) rather than assuming who is going to work on a project by apparent gender. Asking who is interested in playing football or making quilts is preferable to assuming that the men will do one and the women the other. Parenthetically, it is worth mentioning here that the musicians for the assembly, portioning out the parts of hymns for antiphonal singing, labeled the segments for “higher voices” and “lower voices” (rather than “men” and “women”), allowing people to fit where they and their voice range wanted.

Lowe talked of traditional teaching as holding that bodies and sex are sinful and polluting. In this view, LGBT people are deviant and disordered. However, sin can be viewed as a subject position, that is, as personal, relational and structural. Some positions we occupy in relation to others may be sinful while others are not. Powerful positions create the possibility for both justice and abuse.

She pointed out that Martin Luther viewed sin in terms of relationships, recognizing the paradox of being saint and sinner. Luther wrote, “In myself outside of Christ, I am a sinner; in Christ outside of

myself, I am not a sinner.” Luther said that humans are always in front of God, standing before God, and in relationship with God, the neighbor and the world. Lowe said that when sin is viewed as a subject position, that is, as personal, relational and structural, all our relationships are “in front of God, before God” and they can be just or sinful. Bodies, sex and persons are not essentially sinful.

She suggested that the multi-dimensionality of sin needs to be reflected in the prayers we pray: “We have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves, we have not resisted systems of injustice and oppression.”

In Lowe’s view, power is involved in all relationships. Power is not a choice, ability or possession. Power is something to be recognized and then claimed or, alternatively, given-over for full inclusion to occur. Martin Luther wrote of this claiming and giving-up when he reflected that Christians were to model themselves on the divine Christ who gave up power to be truly human, and yet that God’s presence empowers us all.

Power is something to be *recognized* and then claimed or *given-over* for full inclusion to occur.

Recognizing that power is everywhere enables us to see the effects of powerful sexist, homophobic, racist and medical practices, and both confess participation in them and resist them. Recognizing that power is everywhere may call on some to relinquish power and privilege while commending others to claim the power of God within them.

Lowe said the gifts the church and we can get are to welcome everyone and free them from gender stereotypes; liberating LGBT people and emphasizing sin as personal, relational, and structural; empowering those with little power, asking others to give it up, and encouraging full participation.

Mary Lowe is Assistant Professor of Religion at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Jeremy Posadas concentrated our minds on a Bible study of texts from Amos containing the theme text for the assembly:

Therefore, because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate...

I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and

continued on page 12

Speakers

continued from page 11

grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:11–12; 21–24)

Jeremy pointed out that we typically see the words from Amos about letting “justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” as us talking in the name of God to those whom and about that which we wish to change. His challenge to the assembly was to see the texts in another light, one far more two-edged than the typical usage.

In this more challenging view the texts

righteousness is an ever-flowing stream.

And if we don’t work against all oppressions, God is not interested. Hard saying, hard work. But, as Jeremy pointed out, we have engaged with a prophet, what did we expect?

Jeremy said that “we have to continue to boldly proclaim a Word of God that is vast enough to embrace all forms of loving and just relationships, and powerful enough to break all cycles of spiritual violence and abuse.” And that means we can’t leave anybody out; we can’t ignore anyone else being oppressed.

Jeremy challenged the assembly to think about the contents of a Reconciling in



therefore endless, and has to be more than just about us. As it is said, “there is no justice if it is just us.”

It is not sufficient that each of us examines our own commitments to working against other injustices. We have to collectively as a movement, as an association, a coming together of Lutherans in favor of full inclusion, actively engage ourselves

in the causes of others who suffer injustice. Nothing less than the central message of the Bible is at stake, Jeremy stated. “That all will be included in God’s reign of love and justice, and that we must close any distance that separates anyone from participating in that reign.”

While we assist the church in changing its practice regarding its LGBT Lutherans, and thereby its outreach to society about justice on that subject, we must examine and change our practice too. We have to do the work against injustice in all its forms. We are part of the source and force that keeps God’s wide torrent of justice in motion, and God’s righteousness flowing like an ever-lasting stream. ▼

Jeremy Posadas is a doctoral student in the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

We have to **continue** to boldly proclaim a **Word of God** that is vast enough to **embrace** all forms of loving and **just** relationships.

are God talking to us. God is saying in the texts that it is not enough to be on the side of justice for one group, to be against one oppression, to right the ills inflicted on one segment of the body of Christ and society at large, if you are not just as offended and working against all oppressions, working in favor of all those set upon by injustice. It is that effort, against all oppressions, that is the mighty waters of justice we are supposed to keep flowing, so that

Christ statement, version 2.0. In this version, it will not be enough to favor full inclusion for LGBT people because we are fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This version will have to cause us to examine what we have done about racial injustice, poverty, neighborhood safety (not ours, everyone’s), economic justice, disability justice, gender justice, in addition to sexual justice.

This involvement in justice work is

Deputy Director

continued from page 7

faced by LGBT people in countries like Uganda, Malawi, El Salvador, and so many others. While we are working for full participation in the life of the Church and equal rights as citizens, they are fighting for survival. We Lutherans must call on our leaders, both religious and secular, to speak out against violence. And, we can engage gracefully with our parish and synodical partners to build relationships with religious leaders overseas.

Is all this ambitious? Perhaps. If it were not, you would not be reading about it here. It would already be done.

Fortunately, we have proven that we know how to do this work. To accomplish our next goals, we must organize people committed to equality; develop the support

structures and resources to sustain the effort; and work to get our vision of a better church and society to everyone. That is the work that we have been doing for the last eight years. We focused on eliminating the barriers to service by ministers in committed same-gender relationships through our work at synod and churchwide assemblies, council and committee meetings, trainings and LC/NA gatherings. Through these efforts we raised everyone’s knowledge and awareness of LGBT people.

While we were not completely successful at every turn (policy change would have happened years ago had we been), we were building our capacity. Today, we have staff, a legislative team, Regional Coordinators, Synod Liaisons, Reconciling Lutherans, Reconciling in Christ settings, and a new host of allies and

supporters who know us much better than they did in 2001. Through framing our messages for understanding, our vision of a church of full participation has reached enough Lutherans that change took place and continues to take place.

The time is right for the transition to this continued work, but your help is needed to do it. Now is not the time to rest on our laurels and declare the fulfillment of our mission. Now is the time to bring the Lutheran Church into a new era of collaborative, inclusive mission and ministry. Come and join the work. Let’s do the work of reconciliation together. ▼



Let **Acclamations** **Roll**

Honoring Special People at Biennial Assembly
By Rev. Wendy Sherer

Love was in the air again as *Let Justice Roll* wound down with Saturday evening's celebration of those who've made particular contributions to the reconciling work of equality and justice.

The evening's entertainment in the Minneapolis Convention Center began with live and silent auctions, resulting in more than \$9200 raised for LC/NA.

During the banquet, More Light Presbyterians' Director Michael Adee and Rev. Janet Edwards brought greetings and thanks, encouraging attendees to "love a Presbyterian" and do whatever it takes to help the ratification process that still needs to take place in each individual presbytery following positive votes for LGBT inclusion by the national assembly. "If any place ought to be safe and loving," said Adee, "it ought to be the church."

The Jim Siefkes Justice Maker Award, recognizing

straight allies for their contribution to the work of equality, was presented to three recipients this biennium: Bishop Herbert and Rev. Corinne Chilstrom, and June Kjome.

The former churchwide bishop reflected, "I didn't think I would live long enough to see the change that took place last summer. I thank God that I did." Corinne mentioned an early LC/NA chapter with whom she and Herbert had become connected in the late 70s, and acknowledged them as "our first teachers" in this reconciling movement.

June Kjome, a self-proclaimed "old lady activist," shared lively stories of her personal journey with justice work, spanning her 89 years on this earth. She summarized what she learned with these words, "Never give up. We've stood and we have come back until we were able to bring about the changes we've sought. It's God's Work, Our Hands, *and* our mouths."

Also awarded was the Jeannine Janson Distinguished Service Award to both Jerry Vagts and Phil Soucy. Emily Eastwood offered moving (and humorous) tributes to each recipient.

Jerry Vagts said, "I accept this award for all of you," affirming that the policy change only came about because of the work of each and every person involved at every level.

Phil shared his experience as a gay teen in the 1950s, and recognized today's young people, "for whom we have to make the world a safer place." He finds his identity now as "child of God, heir to the Kingdom, and part of God's diversity," offering that "I owe that to my pastor-partner, Emily, and to all of you."

Ross Murray and Emily Eastwood concluded the presentations with encouragement for members to continue enthusiastic participation in the ongoing reconciling efforts of LC/NA, now that policies are beginning to be implemented.

The evening wrapped up, not surprisingly, with "funky dancing" and continued celebration and enjoyment of one another's company. ▼

Above, the Revs. Herbert and Corinne Chilstrom with Len Weiser. Below, June Kjome with Chaplain Rachel Mithelman, Jerry Vagts with Emily Eastwood, Phil Soucy.





Worship – the Leaven

in Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters

Worship was the leaven in the celebration of the assembly, each day being uplifted by a service. The opening worship gathered participants for praise, prayer,

thanksgiving for the gift of baptism, and recognition of God as the source of the stream of ever-flowing justice. The celebration was one of God's grace-filled response to the inequities and oppressions experienced in life.

The chaplains to the assembly conducted the worship: Pastor Jay Wiesner, University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, presiding; Pastor Lura Groen, Grace Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas, preaching; Seminarian Matt James assisting. Verses of Gathering were written by Laura Bourdo, Houston, Texas; David Lohman of the Institute for Welcoming Resources provided the music.

The texts were Amos 5: 18–24, 2 Corinthians 5:16–21, and Luke 4:14–21.

Lura compared the experience of Niagara Falls to the thunderous, inexorable, unrelenting nature of the flow of God's justice, rushing everyone into the future. She spoke of our tears of joy being matched by the tears of sorrow from those who are opposed, and yet God's water rushes on. Justice for LGBT people is not the only cry in God's hearing; justice for others' oppressions needs much work too. And, if we are not working for justice for others, our festivals are just as much noise in God's ears as Amos says they are. Taking the Gulf of Mexico oil pollution as an example, she reminded us that we humans

have a propensity for messing up the waters of God's justice. And, she reminded us that we are claimed by God's love. We cannot undo that. The Gospel sweeps us up, relentlessly, wide as a sea, renewing us and all things.

A portion of the offering has been designated to the Jerry Vagts Training Scholarship Fund, for those who need financial assistance to attend trainings of Lutherans Concerned/North America. The Eucharist completed, we were sent out with a series of blessings prior to the blessing in the name of the Trinity:

"May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your hearts."

"May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom and peace among all people."

"May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or loss so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy."

"May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really can make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done."

On Friday, a "Service of Healing and Reconciliation: The River of Life" was provided. Its invocation rose in song to the Spirit, "descending into baptism waters with transforming gifts from above, offered to sanctify your sons and daughters, our ruin renewed by your love..."

Texts were Isaiah 55: 1–11; Isaiah 42:5–9, and Luke 5:17–26. Words and music, as well as the liturgical texts and settings, were written by Paul Gibson, Clearwater, Florida. Special Music was provided by Rachel Kurtz.



Above, celebratory service begins at Central Lutheran Church. Right, Rev. Stephen Bouman, ELCA Executive Director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission preaching.

In the homily Matthew James reflected on healing and reconciliation, dwelling on the impossibilities in the Gospel: Christ's birth to a virgin peasant woman, healings with mere words, the scope of the mission given to the follower of Christ, that we are to love each other. Fast forward to our time, the church, guided by the message of Christ and the Holy Spirit, moved closer to ending injustices against LGBT Lutherans. This decision brought both joy and pain to various members of the church. Our joy abounds today as we see those who left because they felt the church had turned its back on them in the past can now return, and yet we see sorrow and pain felt by others who say they think the church has today turned its back on them. This cycle seems endless. But he reminded us that reconciliation can take place. He noted that Representative John Lewis and Elwin Wilson, one of the Ku Klux Klan members who viciously beat Lewis 49 years ago, reconciled after all these years. With and through God's grace, nothing is impossible.

This service was a time for transformation and healing, for putting wrongs and injuries aside, "to make the wounded whole" as we sang in "There is a Balm in Gilead."

Blessing and anointing was accompanied by a reading from Revelation 21:2-5; 22:1-2: "I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for the beloved... Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God..."

Individual prayer, consolation, joys, and sorrows could be heard or spoken softly as chaplains provided words of comfort and healing at various places around the worship space. This service closed with the hymn whose opening line is "I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest...'"

On Saturday, the assembly moved to downtown Minneapolis for worship at Central Lutheran and an evening celebration that included a reception, banquet, silent and verbal auctions, awards presentation and finished with funky dancing, as Ross Murray referred to it.

The service at Central was celebrated with the Rev. Sherman Hicks, ELCA Executive Director for Multicultural Ministries, presiding; the Rev. Stephen Bouman, ELCA Executive Director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, preaching; Pastor Lura Groen, Grace Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas, assisting. Music coordinators were Mark Sedio, Central Lutheran Director of Music, and Timothy Strand, Gloria Dei Lutheran Director of Music.

The texts were Isaiah 49:1-7, Ephesians 2:13-22, and John 17:6-9, 17-23. Psalm 139 set the tone for the praise and God's watchfulness: "God, you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thought from afar..."

Pastor Bouman's sermon was about mission. He said the baptismal community is so much more



Above left, Rachel Kurtz; above right, Assembly Chaplains Rev. Lura Groen, Matt James and Pr. Jay Wiesner begin the opening worship service.

complete and real in diversity. Communal struggle can only be healed with the inclusion of every child of God. He offered thanksgiving for the baptismal witness and vocations of LGBT baptized people of God who have shared their ministries, their patience, their love, their convictions, their anger, and their partnership in mission, all in hard, hard times.

As a leader on the churchwide staff and as a former bishop, Pastor Bouman acknowledged that he represented part of the problem LC/NA and others have struggled with so long, and that he was thankful for our prayers, our ministry, and our forgiveness. He spoke of an incorrigibly plural creation by God that we can only be in tune with when we are in tune with diversity. He said that mission was at the heart of what we have gone through together. All of us are

An incorrigibly plural creation by God that we can only be in tune with when we are in tune with diversity.

exiles and, when the center is strengthened by the welcome offered those who had been exiled, it is so that we can move out even more powerfully to the margins. He reminded us that a church that looks at the face of Jesus and turns to the face of the poor and the stranger and the vulnerable will always be renewed. Christ did not pray for us to be of one mind, but of one mission – Christ's mission.

The vocations of all were affirmed as the assembled were reminded of our unity by baptism in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we are joined in God's mission for the life of the world. As the gifts were brought forward, the assembly sang "Take My Life, That I May Be." A tithe of the worship offering was designated to the unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission of the ELCA, for their work in forming evangelizing congregations that make disciples for Christ who use their gifts for God's reign in the church and in the world.

As the assembly began singing the Sending Processional hymn, "Let Streams of Living Justice," the assembly formally processed out of Central

continued on page 16

Worship

continued from page 15

Lutheran to the pealing of Central's great bells and crossed over into the Minneapolis Convention Center to Hall E.

Nearly one year ago, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, gathered in its biennial assembly and made an historic decision to allow ministers in committed, lifelong, same-gender relationships to serve in the church and to remove the policy barriers that had precluded their service since 1989. There was a great sense of déjà vu as we entered the convention center for those who had been present during the historic 2009 Churchwide Assembly. And, though Hall E was completely empty when we entered it this time, in our mind's eye, the Hall was transformed back to the scene in August, when, despite the pent-up emotion from a struggle of decades, we had been asked to stifle any signs of rejoicing out of deference towards those other members of the body of Christ who felt pain and sorrow at the decision.

On Saturday, in the revisited Hall E, we raised a great shout, for the courage of the decision, for the guidance of the Spirit to aid the church in living into its decision, for all those who struggled for this day but had died in Christ before it became reality, for those who had been exiled from the church because of the previous policies that they may hear and return, and because this decision is good before God. This roof, though motionless, was properly raised this time!!

The assembly was charged in a prayer that asked God to "renew in us the commitment to use our gifts in the service of others, and especially of those in need. Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast, welcome the stranger, care for creation, and be loving neighbors to all people."

We must *examine ourselves* to find out whom we despise, whom we have *hatred* for, for there is *our neighbor*.

This was a grace-filled, glorious moment, a release of pent-up emotion and a solemn pledge to continue to do God's work in the world with our hands. The people of God said "Amen!!"

The Closing Worship on Sunday was back in the Hoversten Chapel on Augsburg College's campus. We were reminded by the entrance hymn of the reason we labor so mightily for full inclusion, that "All Are Welcome" in the body of Christ.

During this service, Pastor Lura Groen presided, Pastor Jay Wiesner preached and Matt James assisted. Music was provided by an ensemble from Edina Community Lutheran Church led by Paul Andress, much of the liturgical music having been written by Paul and others in the group.

The texts for the worship were Amos 7:7–17, Colossians 1:1–14, and Luke 10:25–37, which is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Psalm 82 was read: "Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the

right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy..." A portion of the offering was designated to Grace Place and to Trinity Place. Grace Place is a safe, welcoming environment in Houston for vulnerable homeless youth of all sexualities and gender identities, providing nourishment, healthy relationships, and hope for the future. Trinity Place helps

homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning/queer (LGBTQ) youth in New York City to safely transition out of the shelter system and grow into independent, positive, and productive adults.

Pastor Jay reflected on the text, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He said that it was too facile and out of step with the text to cast ourselves in the role of the Samaritan, the outcast, the hated, who nonetheless did good, showed mercy and kindness. We must examine ourselves to find out whom we despise, whom we have hatred for, for there is our neighbor. In terms of the parable, our neighbor is not like us. They are those we believe have harmed us. Baptized into Christ, we must see all those we despise as our neighbors. This parable must be for us a word of reconciliation, doing to us what we wish it to do for them – that we see our enemies as our neighbors.

continued on page 17

NEWSFRONTS

Expelled St. Francis Lutheran Votes to Begin Return Process, Final vote to take place in early 2011

On July 25, following their Sunday worship service and the fellowship meal that followed, the congregation of St. Francis Lutheran Church voted to begin the process of returning to the ELCA. St. Francis had been dismissed from the ELCA in 1995 for having called as pastors Rev. Ruth Frost and Rev. Phyllis Zillhart, out lesbians in a committed relationship.

Following the decisions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and subsequent actions by the ELCA Church Council that implemented the changed policy and

removed the barriers to service by LGBT ministers in committed relationships, the Sierra Pacific Synod reached out to St. Francis, inquiring if St. Francis would like to return to the ELCA.

The vote on July 25th, a quorum being present, passed with only 1 vote against. There was much jubilation. By this vote the congregation indicated that it wants to begin the process with the synod. Over the next few months, the constitution of St. Francis will be brought into compliance with the Model Constitution for congregations, and will incorporate those exceptions that pertain because they are a congregation of a predecessor body that merged to become part of the ELCA. The

president of the council of St. Francis assured all the assembled that there would be "lavish communications" as the process runs.

One member of the congregation described the situation as "we took a bold step forward all those years ago. The ELCA has now taken a step that catches them up. It is appropriate that both see if reuniting is in order."

The end of the process will occur at the Annual General Meeting of the congregation, scheduled normally in January-February. At that meeting, having discussed the matter extensively in the interim, they will take a vote to complete the process, by rejoining the ELCA or not. ▼

It's Time to Believe Out Loud

Believe Out Loud Power Summit

October 9–11, 2010

Doubletree Resort, Orlando, Florida

Faith-based community organizing resulted in policy change in the ELCA. Through RIC/Building an Inclusive Church trainings, our storytelling, faith-filled reference to Scripture

Believe **(((+)))**
OUTLOUD™

and graceful engagement, the change we sought has begun. Our members and our supporters have done amazing things with the skills they have learned at these trainings.

But we all know that full participation is not a lived reality in the Lutheran Church (or even in the ELCA). We have achieved tolerance, at best. In order

We will practice **building effective teams** for work within the denominations of the Lutheran Church seeking to foster **full participation**.

to move closer to full participation, we need to take our efforts to the next level. To get there, Lutherans Concerned is collaborating with the Institute for

Welcoming Resources and our ecumenical partners to present the Believe Out Loud Power Summit, October 9–11 in Orlando, Florida.

Believe Out Loud is an advanced training for leaders and organizers in Lutherans Concerned/North America and the welcoming church movement. Participants will learn concrete skills-building in key areas of organizing and movement building. We will practice building effective teams for work within the denominations of the Lutheran Church seeking to foster full participation in the church and the larger society.

Much of the Power Summit will be divided into tracks: Leadership Development, Church and Secular Organizing, Board Development, Resistance and Conflict, and External Communications. Running across all of the different tracks will be through-lines including: scriptural affirmation, a look at race, bisexual and transgender inclusion, cultural power and political power, and our different identities as individuals, how we are connected to our local church, a part of our denomination, and our relationship to the larger Welcoming Church Movement.

Lutherans Concerned has secured places for 100 Lutherans at the event, so our space is limited. This event is intended for those who have demonstrated leadership in the movement. For those who want to learn about faith-based community organizing, we invite you to one of the many Building an Inclusive Church trainings happening this fall. However, if you are passionate about making the policy change a reality in the Lutheran Church, then be sure to be at the Believe Out Loud Power Summit with us in October.

For more information or to add your name to the list, contact Ross Murray at rossm@lcna.org or call 651-665-0861. ▼



Notes from the International Program Committee (IPC)

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission Gains Consultative Status at UN

A victory for LGBT advocacy came on July 19th when the UN Economic and Social Council voted in favor of a resolution led by the United States to grant the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), based in New York, consultative status. The IGLHRC is only the 10th such group working with LGBT issues to gain such a status at the United Nations. Some of the countries voting against the resolution included: China, Egypt, Namibia, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Zambia.

For the past three years the Director of the LC/NA IPC has been in contact with the IGLHRC, and we are continuing to consider ways to work further with them. They are especially interested in liaison with faith-based groups, and see the LC/NA as one of the more effective groups especially after our work with ELCA policy change.

The IPC is working on ways to more directly link RIC congregations to global mission and to make international issues central to our common concern for the intersection of oppression. This will be one of the IPC goals for the 2010–12 biennium. Some congregations have moved in this direction, encountering both success and disappointment. A more coordinated approach that learns lessons from the experience to date is being advocated by the IPC.

Anti-gay actions in Uganda and Malawi have been put on hold but with no certain final outcome. The IPC believes the pressure LC/NA has added to the international protests against actions in these two countries has had results, and the IPC hopes we can step up the intensity of such advocacy, possibly rallying along with the European Forum in this effort.

—Philip Moeller, Director of International Programs

Worship

continued from page 16

The leadership of LC/NA was installed at the end of the worship service. And we, the assembly, were sent out with the words: “Go into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the Holy Spirit.” The people of God said, “Amen!!” ▼



Seven **LGBT** Pastors Added to the ELCA Roster of Clergy

On July 25, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco, we began "in the name of the Triune God," and finished being sent to "go in peace. Live the truth. Accompany the poor. Serve with joy!" Between, seven pastors rostered with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries were placed on the clergy roster of the ELCA.

As 675 people in attendance and an unknown number on streaming video watched, Pastors Paul Richard Brenner, Jeff Robert Johnson, Ross Donald Merkel, Craig Michael Minich, Dawn Marie Roginski, Megan Marie Rohrer and Sharon Sue

*A new chapter began in their lives and the life of the church, as they joined those **LGBT** clergy already received or serving in the ELCA.*

Stalkfleet were asked if they would live and serve according to the promises they had made, to which they replied as one that they would and asked God to help them.

The assembled were asked "as the people of God, echoing the voices of others and speaking for the whole church," if they would receive the seven "as messengers of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve all people with the gospel of hope and salvation, and if they would "regard them as servants of Christ." The response was thunderously and joyfully in the affirmative.

Bishop Mark Holmerud of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA, presiding, then named them all as "called and ordained ministers in the church of Christ... with Christ's authority to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments, serving God's

people as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world."

With that, a new chapter began in their lives and the life of the church, as they joined those LGBT clergy already received or serving in the ELCA, following the momentous decisions taken at Churchwide Assembly 2009 and the 2010 implementing actions of the ELCA Church Council in consultation with the Conference of Bishops.

It was a service of song, music, proclamations, acknowledgement of the truth about inflicted difficulty and pain, forgiveness, remembrance and joyous anticipation of a future in service to the people of God and all God's children wherever they are found and in whatever condition.

Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, preached, reminding us that everyone was a child of God, full of imperfections and failings, that God was still working to redeem us in the midst of broken people and broken systems, and that what makes the Kingdom of God was not, therefore, the quality of the people in it but the unrestrained love of God, who goes out and gets us.

It was a great afternoon and evening.

Among those assembled for this service were Bishop Dean Nelson of the Southwest California Synod, Bishop David Brauer-Rieke of the Oregon Synod, Bishop Emeritus of the Southwest California Synod Paul Egertson, Bishop Emeritus of the Sierra Pacific Synod Stan Olson and Bishop Marc Andrus of the Episcopal Diocese of California. Bishop Lyle Miller, former bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod, was prevented from attending by an emergency hospitalization, from which he is recovering.

Emily Eastwood, Executive Director, LC/NA said of this day, "I was honored and blessed to witness a dream become reality as the ELCA in the person of three of its current bishops, welcomed seven extraordinary prophets to full participation on the clergy roster of the church. St. Mark's was packed from floor to rafter. Spirit-filled positive energy radiated from every corner. The day felt like a slice of the reign of heaven on earth as grins and tears mingled with goose bumps. Celebration and challenge were the order of this day full of promise for the church and the world to come."

Who are these seven?

Pastor Paul Brenner, 30 years of leadership in the hospice movement and 10 years experience as an inner city parish pastor, who developed an innovative national program of All Inclusive Care for Children and Their Families; the first Palliative Care program for Persons living with Alzheimer's Disease; the first hospice program for the deaf; and the first Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care in a Medical Center.

Pastor Jeff Johnson, University Lutheran Chapel in Berkeley, on the Steering Committee for the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, facilitating the East Bay Interfaith Immigration Coalition,

Prs. Craig Minich, Megan Rohrer, Sharon Stalkfleet, Dawn Roginski, Jeff Johnson, Paul Brenner, Ross Merkel being received by Bp. Mark Holmerud.

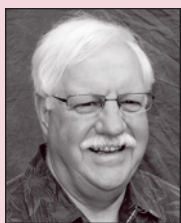
member of the Sierra Pacific Synod Council. Ordained and called by First United Lutheran in 1990, for which the congregation was expelled from the ELCA. He helped to found the predecessor bodies

of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries; served two terms as Dean of the San Francisco Conference; member of the Steering Committee for Religious Witness with Homeless People.

Pastor Ross Merkel, St. Paul Lutheran in Oakland, California, since 1982. Served as Refugee Resettlement Coordinator with Lutheran Social Ministries of Arizona. In

continued on page 20

RIC REGIONS AND REGIONAL COORDINATORS



Region US-1

Paul Jolly
10339 SW 40th Ave.
Portland, OR
97219-6949
H: 503-246-0779
rc-us-1@lcna.org



Region US-1

Mary Lauver
1205 NW Haven Cir.
Pullman, WA
99163-3324
509-332-8447
rc-us-1@lcna.org



Region US-3

Javen Swanson
1061 Thomas Ave.
Saint Paul, MN
55104-2640
H: 612-275-8902
rc-us-3@lcna.org



Region US-5

Kathy Shattuck
N8760 River Rd.
Trego, WI 54888-9282
H: 715-635-2027
rc-us-5@lcna.org



Region US-7

Jim Mapstone-Knamm
78 Sagamore Ave.
Medford, MA 02155
H: 781-488-8267
rc-us-7@lcna.org



Region US-7

Ken Miller
P.O. Box 87
Coopersburg, PA
18036-0087
H: 610-282-3569
rc-us-7@lcna.org



Region US-2

Kenny Callaghan
4388 Ventura Canyon
Ave. Apt. 5
Sherman Oaks, CA
91423-5011
H: 818-667-2711
rc-us-2@lcna.org



Region US-2

Eric Rehms
2116 W. Redbird Dr.
Phoenix, AZ
85085-8709
H: 602-810-1855
rc-us-2@lcna.org



Region US-4

René García
10018 Cedaredge Dr.
Houston, TX
77064-5469
H: 281-732-2032
rc-us-4@lcna.org



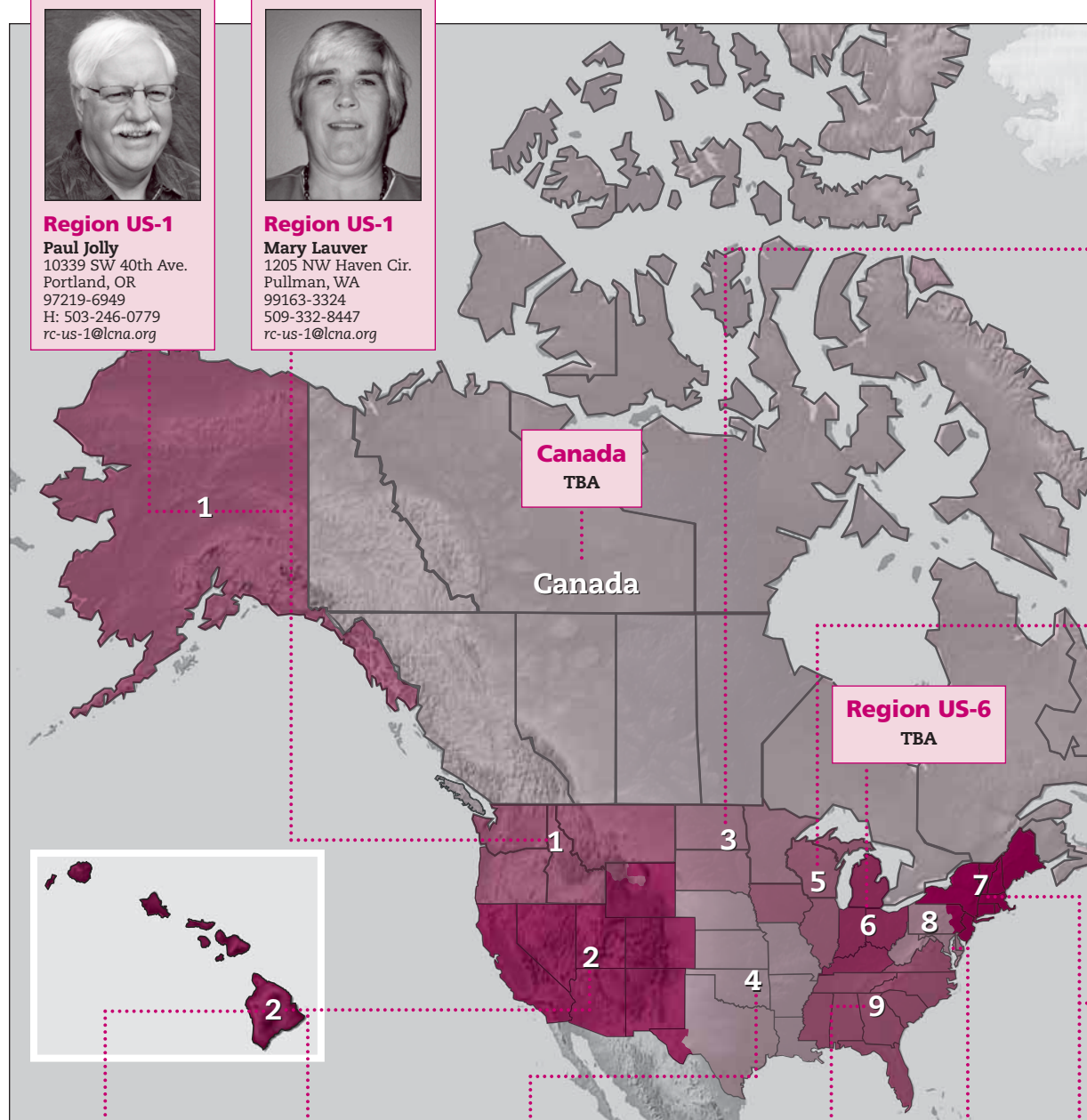
Region US-9

Wayne Morris
1940 Ripon Dr.
Clearwater, FL
33764-4751
H: 727-449-1123
rc-us-9@lcna.org



Region US-8

Scott Binde
1307 Queen St.
Alexandria, VA
22314-2405
H: 703-535-7356
rc-us-8@lcna.org



ELCA Synod Assemblies 2010

In the history of our movement in the ELCA, the 2010 synod assembly season was a “first” in a couple of crucial ways. The 2010 season represents the first round of business conducted by the synods where

ministers in same-gender relationships were not precluded by policy from full participation. Issues related to world hunger, social justice, campus ministry, church budgets, evangelism, elections, Bible studies—which is to say, all of the important ministries of the church—were discussed, debated, and voted on. The business of the church continues to move forward, and it is moving forward in a more welcoming, more inclusive context—thanks be to God!

Another first: LC/NA’s legislative work was, for the most part, to preserve the progress of 2009. Our primary goal this season was to defend the current teachings of the sexuality social statement and the ministry policies. While we recognize that neither the social statement nor the

In total, motions to rescind the ministry policies were defeated in 26 synods and passed in two (Western Iowa and South Carolina); motions to recall the social statement were defeated in 14 and passed in two (South Dakota and South Carolina). To see the full statistics for the synod votes, go to <http://www.goodsoil.org/legislation> for a detailed report.

Judging from these results, it’s clear that organized opposition against full inclusion continues but has reduced in strength. Over the last two assembly seasons, we have seen several historically unsupportive synods start voting in favor of full inclusion. It seems now that the churchwide assembly has spoken, many who have been straddling the fence and voting for the status quo have decided to stand with the new decision of

*We...saw this season as a year to **maintain the gains** that have been made. Standing for the **status quo** in church policy is certainly **a new role** for us!*

ministry policies are ideal (in some cases far from it), we nevertheless saw this season as a year to maintain the gains that have been made. Standing for the status quo in church policy is certainly a new role for us!

In our new role, we are pleased to report that 59 synods are abiding by ELCA teachings and policies. We cannot conclude, however, that the policies have gone unchallenged. In fact, by some measures, 2010 was nearly as active as 2009. In all, 40 synods considered resolutions or memorials related to full inclusion in one way or the other. Of those, 35 either defeated anti-full inclusion motions or passed favorable ones. Most of the motions (28) were attempts to rescind the ministry policies so that partnered LGBT ministers would no longer be included on the roster. Sixteen called for recalling the social statement on sexuality. In some cases, motions sought to “repudiate” the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and to declare it to have violated the Lutheran Confessions and Scripture.

the denomination. Even many who have been against full inclusion are saying they can live with the change and get on with the other aspects in our common mission. The current dynamic was summed up nicely by Rev. Wendy Sherer, former LC/NA Coordinator for Region 6, as she reflected on the recent assembly in the Northwest Ohio Synod:

“One theory I have for this year’s shift is that the ‘movable middle’ we’ve always talked about has finally shifted in favor of the policy changes, simply because the changes have now occurred. I believe some church folks will always hold out until the decision is effectively made for them, and then they have official ‘permission’ to go along with the decision that’s been made and seemingly endorsed by leadership.”

Of course, our work is not yet completed. Even though we have seen remarkable change in the ELCA, it’s crucial that we remain active at synod assemblies. In 2010, the synods where LC/NA has the least number of contacts were the same

synods that voted against full inclusion or where the vote margins were the slimmest. The basic lesson is this: organizing works. Relationship-building works. Action and words matter. Reconciling works. If you have never been involved in assembly work, this is a great time to start. We need you to attend synod and churchwide assemblies as voting members. We need you to sponsor information tables, which enable supporters to find each other and put a face on our ministry. We need you to serve on synod councils and candidacy committees.

A multitude of thanks go to our regional coordinators, the Goodsoil Legislative Team, synod liaisons and other contacts, and LC/NA staff members. ▼

Added to ELCA Roster

continued from page 19

1994, Ross was the first ELCA pastor removed by ecclesiastical trial for being openly gay and in a committed relationship.

Pastor Craig Minich, East Bay Lutheran Youth Program with calls from Trinity Lutheran of Alameda, and St. Paul Lutheran, United Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, and Resurrection Lutheran, all of Oakland.

Pastor Dawn Roginski, former Associate Pastor and Director of Parish Programs at St. Francis Lutheran, San Francisco; prior member of the board of Lutherans Concerned/North America; served on the leadership team for the ELM roster; 10 years service at a residential treatment facility for seriously mentally-ill patients; and served as chaplain at a residential treatment center for children.

Pastor Megan Rohrer, Executive Director of Welcome; Project Manager of Project Homeless Connect’s Growing Home Community Garden; board member of the Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital. Served as Director of Candidacy for Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries; served on the Steering Committee for the San Francisco Trans March; an author for the Human Rights Campaign’s *Out in Season: the Church Year Through Transgender Eyes*; winner of Out History’s “Since Stonewall Local History” Competition.

Pastor Sharon Stalkfleet, former pastor of the Lutheran Ministry to Nursing Homes, called by St. Paul Lutheran, Resurrection Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran in Oakland, and Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda.

No wonder the congregation assembled shouted, “Thanks be to God.” ▼