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Our Logo

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

Statement of Sanctuary

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

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

Diversity and Anti-Racism

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



RICHARD W. GARNETT

It's Time to Believe Out Loud

By Carol M. Dunn and Jean Etsinger

Now is the time for welcoming church programs, like Lutherans Concerned/North America, to enhance its witness and welcome in the congregation, in the denomination and in the wider world. That was the key message of the

October *Believe Out Loud Power Summit* in Orlando, Florida heard by members of Lutherans Concerned and other Christian groups working for full participation in their church bodies. Gathered with 300 faith-group members were leaders from Lutherans Concerned/North America, Reconciling Ministries Network, Integrity USA, More Light Presbyterians, the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns, the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, the Institute for Welcoming Resources of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Association Against Defamation), Auburn Seminary, and specialists in multicultural and organizational development.

Urged to use the power of our faith, the top leaders of Lutherans Concerned learned how

they can take their organizing and graceful engagement to the next level, use their Lutheran voice in society, build infrastructure, shape agendas and, finally, frame issues with faithful themes so as to build collective action. Over three days, participants were urged to link the work within their congregations and denominations to that of others in order to create a strong movement for change.

The summit began Saturday morning with worship before the first plenary. There was worship again midway through the Sunday sessions and again Monday afternoon to close the gathering. Lutherans also celebrated communion Sunday evening at a service with a *capella singing* and spontaneous prayer.

In her opening sermon, the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Institute for Welcoming Resources and

Participants from across North America attending Believe Out Loud join as one to tell LGBT youth that "It Gets Better!"

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The Editor

DALE TRUSCOTT



“The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us. Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.”

— JOHN 17:20A–21, *THE MESSAGE BIBLE*

Emily Eastwood’s message to us in this issue is a profound reflection on the impact and implications of bullying in our society, among our young people, especially toward LGBT persons. I certainly support her words and LC/NA’s intentions to respond in effective ways to this crisis.

At the same time, I am reading the news releases about the financial crisis in the ELCA and the resultant downsizing to be implemented. I am also hearing stories from my old Ohio “stomping ground,” where I served the church for so many years. Several of the large Lutheran churches that sit near the town squares in Ohio’s small

accepted members of society and church. And yet, I see pastors whom I once deeply respected when I was a young pastor and congregations they serve more interested in what I believe to be faulty Biblical theology and molly-coddling of influential members with money and power than they are with preaching the gospel and doing ministry in the midst of troubled times.

Jesus agonized in his final prayer for his followers before he went to his death. There was

*What will be the health of the church we have **struggled** so hard to be a part of?*

cities and several suburban growth churches have left or are leaving the ELCA while others are in deep division. A former bishop in Ohio, whom I served under for 25 years, has been instrumental in forming a new denomination.

I can’t help but combine all this negative news in my mind. The ELCA has taken a mighty step forward on the road toward full inclusion. Our society is beset with fear related to the economy and divided politics. Violence has erupted against convenient targets, LGBT people who seek only to be fully

obviously dissension among his followers, dissension between his followers and the Jews of Roman Palestine, and dissension among the Christians in the community out of which John’s gospel arose. It is no consolation to me that we Christians have always had times when we were more interested in disagreeing than we were in becoming “one mind and heart,” no consolation at all. The only way we can introduce the wisdom and wonder of Jesus of Nazareth to others is to do so with some unanimity of spirit.

Yet, news abounds of pastors

and congregations who are celebrating inclusion and return to the church. We read about some of them in this issue. It is ironic, to be sure. The history of reform movements in the church is replete with stories of dissension and division. We need only to look at our beloved Reformation period. Before Luther was gone, the movement had divided in several ways, the “parent” church in Rome rose up in condemnation of the reformers and the reformed, and eventually thirty years of war ravaged Europe. And yet, through it all, the gospel of Jesus was spread on all sides of the issue in one way or another. I just read that the Lutheran church and the Roman Catholic church in Germany plan to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation together.

There simply is no stopping the gospel. We can hinder it, to be sure. But the Word of God cannot be stopped.

I tried to dialog with an old colleague in Ohio who is leading his congregation out of the church. I failed to have any influence upon him, as far as I know. However, I continue to rejoice in the stamina, the faith, the commitment, the resilience of this ministry to which I have belonged for these twenty-two years, Lutherans Concerned/North America. We are doing a great ministry.

What will be the ultimate health of the church we have struggled so hard to be a part of? That is an unanswered question. But we are assured that what we are about is none other than the work of Christ for the sake of those who have been bullied, for the sake of those who have not yet heard that there is any welcome in Christianity for them, for the sake of all who seek justice and love. ▼

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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

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Executive Director

EMILY EASTWOOD



In Minnesota it is said we have two seasons, winter and “road repair.” Near our house is the confluence of two major, rather old freeways. I say confluence because the north/south interstate runs together for a time with an east/west highway without benefit of clover leaves, sufficient lanes, or traffic control ramps. As the cities grew, so did the traffic, which at rush hour turned four lanes into a parking lot known as the “cross town commons.”

Four years ago, the state began a construction project to “fix” a thirty-year old problem. Rain or shine, summer and winter, reconstruction continued with sometimes-unexpected results. Ramps, with or without adequate signage, changed weekly, if not daily, in the summers when in “the commons” the only word coming out of my GPS device was “recalculating.” Temporary bridges were installed

It is one thing to suffer **ourselves**; it is quite another to see this **suffering inflicted** on others...

which appeared perilous at best. Entrances became bobsled chutes with rather high, temporary concrete walls, single narrow lanes, and twisting turns. Uninformed lane choice became a roll of the dice, sometimes resulting in rather embarrassing detours.

A few weeks ago, as the project neared completion, I was driving on the east/west portion approaching the area where the two freeways would meet each other. In the gravel between the construction zones for the north-bound and west-bound lanes, there stood an old, dented, battleship-gray mailbox. My head did a double take. The incongruence of the image demanded another look. Going 50 mph in the chute, there was no time for more than one second glance. The red flag was up; there was a message inside.

I thought about that note and its placement. Of course, there was no house number because there was no house. Only those with special access to the

construction zone would find it; however, the red flag signaled its presence for all who passed. I doubted the letter was a greeting of encouragement or a bill. More likely, it was all business with instructions, plans or status updates. I would never know the content, but the image stuck in my mind. I drove by again two days later, hoping for another glance. The mailbox was gone, and with it, whatever message lay within.

At about the same time, the Twin Cities newspaper ran local stories about teen suicides tied to anti-gay bullying. There were reports of incidents of such bullying at Augsburg College, and national stories of additional deaths and acts of violence, all tied to anti-gay bias. Our heads turned to look. With each new story we took a second, a third, a fourth look. Each time we saw more clearly. We were not shocked, really. Our own stories of such treatment had long filled such battle-worn gray mailboxes hidden in plain sight, red flags raised. We remembered. It is one thing to suffer ourselves; it is quite another to see this suffering inflicted on others, seemingly perpetuated *ad infinitum*. These were our children, the children of our hearts.

Enough is enough!

Despite differences over interpretation of scripture, heads of denominations have come together to speak out against bullying, admitting its link to anti-gay religious rhetoric. In the midst of downsizing and reconstruction/restructuring of the ELCA, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson made a video for the *It Gets Better* project. In his message, Bishop Hanson has drawn a line in the sand, proclaiming LGBT people as children of God and witnessing to the truth that LGBT people are who God created us to be. His statement is reassuring and unequivocating. It is by far the most positive statement to date by a presiding bishop of the ELCA, both proclaiming God’s love and standing against violence and harassment of LGBT people.

While we welcome this message, we know that in order to move Lutherans and their congregations to act to prevent bullying, we must do much more than reassure the victims. Our private pain must be turned to action fueled by “meet, right and salutary” anger. We must enact a plan and produce concrete action steps to turn Bishop Hanson’s stated core values and our own from homily to reality, from policy to practice.

Churches and personal religious bias are often behind the restraint of school boards, administrators, teachers and advisors in speaking out against bullying. In this case, silence obviously can equal death. By and large, even our RIC congregations have not educated their members or activated them for concrete action against bullying of any kind. Anti-bullying should be “mom and apple pie” for all Lutherans. In many ways a congregational conversation about anti-bullying can easily precede education and dialogue about RIC or the issues

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RIC Settings

Added to the Roster since last issue

Augustana Lutheran Church, Portland Oregon

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, New York

Christ Lutheran Church, Natick, Massachusetts

Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Louisville Colorado

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, North Vancouver, British Columbia

Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Saint Louis Park, Minnesota

Messiah Lutheran Church, Mountain Iron, Minnesota

Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut

St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, Port Jervis, New York

St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Monona, Wisconsin

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

R I C C O R N E R

An Outpouring of Love at Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer

By **Carol Dunn**



JANE BYRNE

After the historic votes in August of 2009, as change in policy became change in practice, members of many congregations expressed their relief and joy. Congregations whose interest in Gospel justice fueled their actions as well as those more directly impacted, where pastors had not been rostered, or where lay members had been censured, all felt the presence of the Spirit. Comments from congregations in Florida, California, Missouri, Texas ... all indicated that reinstatement and lifting of censure are heartening and satisfying. Delight, like the finest cream, has risen to the top in those church families.

But in the case of Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer (LCCR) in Minneapolis, the responses to a simple “how do you feel now that your pastor is ‘official’” has been an outpouring of joy and love.

“Now that our bishop, Craig Johnson, has formally signed Pastor (Mary) Albing’s letter of call, we are publicly assured our calling her was no

place we needed, with a welcoming attitude and a (healthy!) family atmosphere. Three years ago Scott and I stood up at LCCR and exchanged vows and rings. LCCR is a special place for us.” He continues to say how thrilled he is with the policy changes, which allow rostering or re-rostering of people who are truly gifted and called. For Mr. Doughty, the changes — and the support he has received from Pr. Albing and others at LCCR — mean he will be returning to seminary.

Larry Koch has been a member at LCCR for about twenty years. He and his wife were married there, baptized their infant son (now 14) there, and feel a part of the “fabric and family” of the church. Mr. Koch mentioned the 1983 decision, when he was Council President, to offer a “celebration of love” for two women in a committed relationship. He reviewed the decision-making process and noted how glad he was to have been part of it. He concluded, referring to the present, “I don’t think I’ve ever been a part of a more alive and active church congregation — reaching out to the community, welcoming people who may have not easily found a church home elsewhere, sharing the Gospel message of salvation, hope, and reconciliation. We’ve grown in numbers, but more importantly we’ve grown in our ministries of social justice, hospitality, and love.”

And a 29-year member of LCCR, Jean Johansson, relates an anecdote told by the pastor who first invited LCCR to welcome LGBT people. She says that, according to Pr. Don Luther, when theologian Joe Sittler was in Jerusalem, he needed repairs on his car. “When the mechanic completed his work, started the car, and heard the engine running perfectly, he exclaimed, *tsaddiq* (Arabic for ‘righteous’). The engine was being and doing what it was created to be and to do. The actions taken at the 2009 Assembly have propelled the ELCA into policies that will enable it to be and do what it was created to be and do.”

Consider the enthusiasm of these comments, from relatively new members, long-time members, lay leaders, gay and straight. They reflect the relief,

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...always known it was a **wise decision**.

mistake. Those of us who served on the call committee seven years ago have always known it was a wise decision. At that time Bishop Johnson said the same, though church rules kept him from putting it in writing,” say Chuck and Hertha Lutz.

Pam Middleton writes, “For me ... the biggest struggle was seeing a quality pastor not being recognized in the larger church for her gifts. However, all of that changed when Bishop Johnson signed her letter of call! Now that Pastor Mary is officially back from her so called ‘leave of absence,’ we will continue to carry out the gospel of Jesus Christ, sharing the Good News with all who enter our doors and beyond. As for Pastor Mary, she will continue to preach the gospel, teach us and shepherd us through the joys and sorrows of life as we journey fully into the heart and never ending love of Jesus Christ!”

“My partner and I have been members at LCCR for several years now,” says Erik Doughty. Mary was my preaching professor when I first went to seminary (back in the late 1990s) so I knew she was great. Scott (my partner) and I have found LCCR just the sort of

As a part of the service, not only did the bishop sign Pr. Albing’s letter of call that was drawn up in May of 2003, but all present signed in affirmation of her call. Here Chuck Lutz and Mady Ekue-Hettah sign the letter

R I C C O R N E R

Augustana

Lutheran Church, Portland

By **Carol Dunn**

Augustana Lutheran, Portland, Oregon, is a diverse congregation that walks the talk. It houses ministries for child-care, housing and job opportunities, farm workers, a sanctuary program and others. Its campus receives in the vicinity of 20,000 visits over the course of a year, outside of the 4 four worship opportunities, and it has long stood in the forefront of justice issues, both within and outside the framework of the ELCA.

It is joyous to weave together an inclusive community.

In fact, not long after its founding in 1906 as a Swedish Lutheran Church, members buried a time capsule including a proud statement by female members, explaining that they were able to vote on congregation matters. (Remember, the public vote for women didn't come for nearly 20 twenty more years.) Its pastor, Walter J. Knutson III (known as Pastor Mark) said Augustana tries to bring the Gospel to life and to pursue justice to the best of their ability. The congregation, he said, is proud to serve as an example of what can be done to live the Gospel, and that "it is joyous to weave together an inclusive community."

The congregation numbers about 700, among

them Native-Americans, African and Asian Americans, Latinos, and many people who choose no hyphens or classifications. Some are seniors, many are young families; some 200 are under the age of 21, 45 of them under three. Augustana attracts new members from within its neighborhood and from across the city, with families intentionally bringing their children to experience a broad understanding of inclusion. More than 50 fifty members are part of the LGBT community, and many are partnered. Commitment ceremonies have been held numerous times.

Lay leadership is as widely diverse as the overall membership. One member, Sue Best, told her story: she had been an active member for years of a progressive church in another denomination. Sometime after her divorce, she attended a service with her partner, and immediately felt unwelcome. After a search, they tried Augustana because they saw constant activity there. Sue's partner announced at their first service that they were partners, and Pr. Mark offered his usual statement that "you should know that you are home." And at the congregation

summer breakfast that followed, one of the elderly long time members declared happily, "You'll fit." They have

been active members ever since, serving on council, as lectors, assisting ministers, and on committees.

Once again this year, as is the case every few years, Augustana members are doing a complete reading of the Bible within 66 weeks — one book per week.

Pastor Mark explained why the congregation chose to become R.I.C. this past summer after years of inclusivity, saying simply that they decided to "cross the t's and dot the i's" and make formal what they were already living out in daily life. Augustana has been a member of the Ecumenical LGBT coalition in Oregon for over a decade.

Augustana's justice ministry has shown itself with letters to the Bishops in 1996 urging a full welcome to pastors in committed relationships, actions to assist the city police department, and fighting the proposed state law limiting marriage to one man and one woman (the law passed, however). The congregation participates in a number of ecumenical programs in the Portland area, including some with churches far less inclusive. But, says Pr. Mark, "our stance is well known and we get along." ▼

Augustana's youth tell the story of God's love for everyone.



Christ the Redeemer

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the joy, the fulfillment of years of yearning, as they see their pastor and their congregation be empowered to do what they were created to do. Let all the people say, "Amen!" ▼

News from Region 8

On June 26, the Pittsburgh Chapter of Lutherans Concerned sponsored “Let the Whole Church Sing: A Eucharistic Celebration of Unity in Diversity” for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod. This traditional worship service celebrated the decisions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and affirmed that we all are members of one Body of Christ. St John’s Lutheran Church of North Versailles, a vibrant congregation in the process of coming to terms with diversity itself, graciously hosted the worship, with Pastor Bradley Schmeling of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Atlanta, Georgia, presiding.

We gathered together first for hymns and then confessed our sins. A tangible reminder of our absolution through God’s saving work of Baptism came as we were espurred while singing during the processional. Pastor Schmeling proclaimed the Gospel and shared some of his experiences from the trials he and his congregation endured. He wove both narratives into a message of hope for us today as many in the church endure our own trials. Members from several congregations in the Synod shared the Eucharist with one another and Pastor



Schmeling, proclaiming our unity centered in Christ.

Ending in song, we retired to the fellowship hall for a reception. There we celebrated a fantastic diversity of delicious food, ranging from chocolate-covered strawberries and ganaches to chicken/apple sliders, skewers and gyros. During the reception, members from different churches mingled and shared fellowship. We thank God for all those who made this worship celebration into an unforgettable experience of unity and joy. A copy of the worship service is available at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Resource Center. —Peter Keyel, Regional Coordinator

News from Region 9

The Central Florida chapter of Lutherans Concerned has had a full fall. Elizabeth Schwartz, a Miami lawyer specializing in LGBT issues, came to Clearwater to present an attorney’s view of the legal situation in Florida for LGBT people. She spoke of the changes coming (the anti-gay adoption law, whose repeal she worked on, was overturned by the state judiciary soon after her appearance in Clearwater) and of the difficulties in law for LGBT people. She identified federal and state barriers, inequities in tax codes, issues with wills, etc.

In October, five members of the chapter presented a forum to the Synodical Women’s Organization, highlighting the consequences of church silence on anti-gay bullying, and stressing the value of full inclusion. Scheduled for November was a meeting with the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council, seeking ways in which the LC/CF chapter can work with the Synod on issues of mutual concern.

—Wayne Morris, Regional Coordinator

Executive Director

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facing LGBT people in general.

For these reasons, we call on the ELCA to collaborate with us and our ecumenical partners to produce web-based congregational and individual resources to end bullying of all kinds. Our legislative team will launch a synodical and churchwide assembly strategy in early winter which will include memorials and resolutions regarding anti-bullying. In the midst of its own financial crisis, which is shared by most mainline denominations, the ELCA is unlikely to spend any money on production and dissemination of resources. We must not let their downsizing and reconstruction inhibit the meeting of this need. We must not let the lives cut short be given in vain.

LC/NA is responding. We are turning our private pain into public action to help fix a problem that predates our organization. The red flag has been up on this one for a long time. Many of us added

our own messages to the box. With a new LC/NA board, which is bright, talented, committed and clearly engaged, and with our own continued organizational development underway, it would be tempting to stay the course, not reacting with more than a single glance to the apparent sea change in cultural context. The media has responded, publicly proclaiming the link between teen suicide and anti-gay bullying. For me the temptation to stay the course lasted about a millisecond. We looked again and again and chose to pick up the message, read it, weep, get angry and then act for change. The speed at which events have unfolded and the temporary, though strategic, walls erected to protect our overall progress have not overcome our will or the power of the Holy Spirit to move us. As LC/NA grows we remain nimble enough to react and revise as needed always testing our direction against our mission. Our trajectory remains unchanged, our destination, a vision of a church and a world that welcomes and includes.

The new “crosstown commons” opens mid November. Even now there is no remnant of the mailbox. The message inside has been delivered. The four-year solution to a 30-year problem is implemented. How well it works and whether it will stand the test of time and Minnesota winters remains to be seen. Graciously, new drivers in the next year will never know what older drivers have endured in that stretch of highway. May it be so for the church, society and the children who come after us. We are entrusted with their care. May God grant us the grace, wisdom, courage, capacity and ability to assist the process of change needed to ensure that all are welcome at God’s table of blessing and power. Amen. ▼



Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, faith work director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, welcomes the community to the first Believe Out Loud event.

Believe Out Loud

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Faith Work director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, reminded us forcefully that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice, inclusion and right relationship for all people – and all means *all*.”

The recent tragic suicides of teens in the face of anti-gay bullying were a focus for prayer, reflection and planning at the gathering. LC/NA Executive Director Emily Eastwood said in a statement: “Horrendous anti-gay election rhetoric and attacks coming from both within and outside the ‘Church’ indicate that using our Lutheran voice for full inclusion is more critical than ever in both public and churchly communities. Lives are at stake. It’s time to Believe Out Loud.”

Summit music director David Lohman’s signature hymn for the assembly had strong voices proclaiming “No more staying silent! It’s time to proclaim aloud the faith that we hold dear. It’s time to reach out to the rejected. It’s time to stand up and say, ‘No more!’ It’s time to create a church in this day where ev’ryone’s welcomed in the door. It’s time to believe, believe out loud.”

We find ourselves in a “movement moment,” two speakers, Beth Zemsky and the Rev. Debra Peevey, said on separate occasions. “The expertise and clarity of purpose of the secular organizers and the uniquely suited language of belief of the faith organizers must come together and work together,” Peevey said, “to bring more people, more relationships, more outreach.”

Driving home that theme, Peevey said bluntly, “Our loves and our lives depend on that.” Addressing

the issues of rights and privilege, especially in the public or political sector, she said that when the tyranny of the majority threatens harm to the minority, “far from being optional, our active participation is required.” The first openly gay pastor ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), back in 1981, Peevey currently directs the Ratification Campaign for More Light Presbyterians.

Zemsky, founding director of the LGBT Programs Office at the University of Minnesota, gave overviews of Social Movement Theory and of what she termed “intercultural competency.” She said social movements are characterized by collective, intentional action; enough structure for

*We find ourselves in a movement moment...expertise and **clarity** of secular organizers and uniquely suited language of belief of the **faith** organizers.*

sustainability; “outsider” status; transformational scope and scale; an aspirational worldview; and formation of a collective identity.

Movements are cyclical and clustered in waves, she said. The peak comes when the movement has the most resonance with the public. The trough that inexorably follows is a time of “movement maintenance” – staying alive until the movement can begin to build toward a new peak. For understanding cultures, she used the illustration of an iceberg: “The importance is what’s beneath the surface.” Where cultures intersect, she called for following what she termed The Platinum Rule: “Do unto others as they would do/have done unto themselves.”

continued on next page



RICHARD W. GARNETT

Summit participants met by region, by denomination, and by interest areas, so movement was fluid and continuous, allowing attendees to build a multiplicity of bridges and relationships. Of course, we also met in lobbies, at restaurants and by the pool. The weather cooperated with balmy days and cool evenings.

Study Tracks

The theme “Believe Out Loud” was pursued in four study tracks: Leadership Development, Communications, Campaigns and Resistance. In each track, participants spent ten hours absorbing information, strategizing and putting what they

learned into action. We heard that faith leaders must frame – or re-frame – discussion. Allowing LGBT opponents, or even those in the movable middle, to set the terms of conversation can prevent advocates of full inclusion and reconciliation from addressing the urgent questions.

The Leadership Track focused not only on developing leadership skills but also on “building capacity” – imparting skills for recruiting and empowering others to become leaders. Presenters said the way to mobilize members of congregations is “by asking for what you need, not taking what you can get.” When participants split into four groups, most of

those in one group were LC/NA members, so discussion focused on Lutheran concerns. Barriers cited to recruiting support for the Reconciling in Christ movement included acting alone, distance/time issues, busy-ness of people, clergy fear of losing members and financial giving, approaching members against a pastor’s wishes, failure to see a need, and lack of advocacy from the top.

In her Leadership presentation, Beth Zemsky said leaders “meet people where they’re at, move people to the next step and help people secure resources.” Intercultural leadership skills, she said, are cultural self-awareness, empathy (validating that another’s experience is real and true for that person), curiosity, and tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility and courage. In the coming together of cultures, shared meaning cannot be assumed, she said; it must be discovered, negotiated and/or created to attain collaboration and coalition. Good intentions are not sufficient to assure good results, for intent may not equal impact.

Those in the Communications Track learned basic principles such as the need to avoid false dichotomies (such as gays vs. blacks, allies vs. evangelicals) and practiced interview techniques on camera. Documentary filmmaker Macky Alston acted the role of aggressive interviewer. This was a challenge for some – but in the supportive atmosphere, a very helpful exercise. Led by the Rev. Anthony Hebblethwaite, the group looked at Web 2.0 and its social media potential, considering many tools, which allow extensive and immediate data gathering as well as rapid and interactive exchange of information.

Ann Craig of GLAAD urged the group to form relationships with media personnel and to thank

Upcoming Trainings on Building an Inclusive Church

February 18-20, 2011
Phoenix, Arizona
Faith Lutheran Church

March 4–6, 2011
Overland Park, Kansas
(Kansas City area)
Atonement Lutheran Church

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.

them for addressing issues of concern, even if the content of coverage isn't what you would wish. Her idea of "focusing to best choose the frame and message to reach a specific person whom you visualize" was strongly echoed by other trainers. A set of free posters teaching acceptance is downloadable at www.BelieveOutLoud.com. (Look under Ads.)

The Campaign Track explored ideas of "mercy" and "justice" and claimed that our vocation in the world is to act with both mercy and justice. Participants heard and helped report the state of the movement in our denominations and in the wider world. Speakers stressed that power (defined as the

ability to act for change) is within us as people of faith. Participants even practiced supporting some of our partners, talking to Presbyterians who are deciding to ratify a policy change similar to that of the ELCA, and Floridians who support adoption by same-gender couples. In all of our graceful conversations we need to use value-based language, unafraid to utter words like gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.

The Resistance Track dealt with barriers, resistance, and conflict. Leaders here focused on helping participants to find ways to create comprehensive

continued on page 16

"Believe Out Loud" Posters and Ads

Permission granted to download from www.believeoutloud.com. Do not edit; give credit to Believe Out Loud.

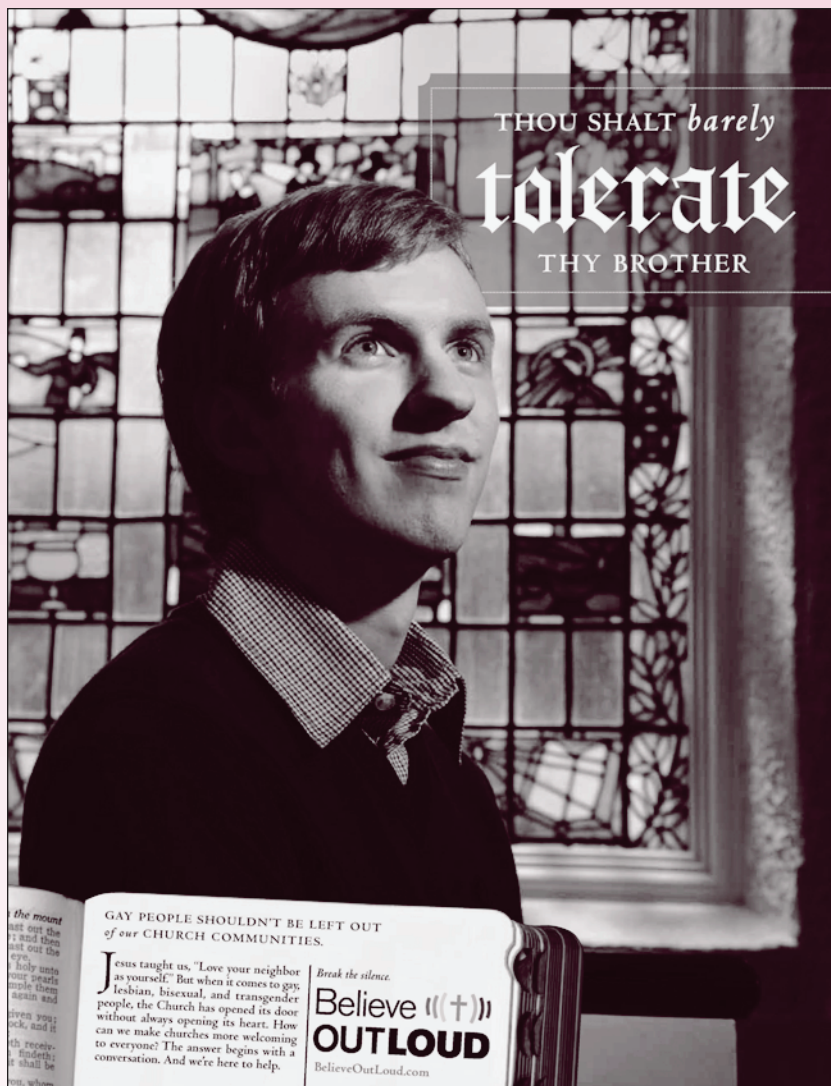
Gasps and startled double-takes greet the photo of a young man posed in front of a stained glass window when the wording says "Thou shalt barely tolerate thy neighbor" Similarly, leaning in to read and re-read the text occurs when people look at the photo of an older woman with the legend "Thou shalt ignore her at coffee hour" or one of two women together with the words "Love some of thy neighbors."

Two more posters: An interracial male couple sitting in a church pew with a smiling grade school girl, and words that say "Thou shalt not accept a play date with their daughter," and, finally, one of a beautiful and strong person with the caption "Blessed are those who Discriminate."

But in the lower corner of each poster is a text box with the very clear message that these captions are exactly NOT what the churches should teach or what Jesus preached, that discrimination against LGBT people is un-Scriptural and un-Christian.

The BelieveOutLoud campaign has prepared these five posters for free use with the only stipulations being no conflict with the message, credit to the campaign, and no changes in the wording. Their developers have made the prints available for download without cost from their www.believeoutloud.com website to make them accessible and easy to use.

The posters were distributed to those who attended the Communications track of



the Believe Out Loud conference in Orlando in October. They have already been used in a presentation to a Synod women's gathering in one Synod, and made a strong impression on those who saw them. The use of the church settings, the Gothic print, and the verbal play on the Ten Commandments immediately trigger the "whoa!— is that

church teaching?" response.

The campaign encourages people to download them and use them in their own congregations or in print media any way possible to communicate the message of full inclusion as a Christian value.



Receptions of ELM pastors

By **Phil Soucy**

One of the signs of the decisions taken by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly is the continuing reception of “extraordinarily” ordained pastors onto the clergy roster of the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In addition to the six received in San Francisco, now five others have been received. And, more are to come.

Since the August reception of six ELM pastors (and the reinstatement of another, Ross Merkel, who had been on the ELCA roster), Pastors Anita Hill, Ruth Frost, Phyllis Zillhart, Jen Nagel, and Erik Christensen have been received onto the clergy roster.

The eleven received had been “extraordinarily” ordained, meaning they were ordained outside the usual practice of the ELCA. Their ordinations, over the twenty year period since 1990, were not recognized by the ELCA, and any pastoral position

The Rite of Reception...recognized their ordinations as having been valid.

they held within the ELCA was listed at “vacant.” For the entire time of their ministry from ordination they had been on the roster of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries, until the day of their reception. The Rite of Reception that receives them recognizes their ordinations as having been valid.

Reception for Anita Hill, Ruth Frost, and Phyllis Zillhart

Pastors Anita Hill, Phyllis Zillhart, and Ruth Frost are joyously received by the church.

The Rite of Reception for Anita Hill, Ruth Frost, and Phyllis Zillhart was held at Lutheran Church of the

Redeemer in St. Paul, Minnesota, on a bright, clear September 18th. Bishop Peter Rogness, St. Paul Area Synod, presided. Bishop Craig Johnson, Minneapolis Area Synod, participated in the ceremony, as did former ELCA Presiding Bishop Herb Chilstrom, former Bishop Paul Egertson of the Southwest California Synod, and former Bishop Lowell Erdahl of the St. Paul Area Synod. Seventy clergy and more than 500 congregants filled the church on a bright, fall day. The Rev. Barbara Lundblad, Union Theological Seminary, New York, preached.

As Bishop Rogness observed to all, the day was a demonstration that “our church has come to a point that it has decided that the doors need to be open more widely and circles need to be drawn larger. That we are going to trust local congregations who are drawn by the Spirit to be faithful in their ministry in given places, who are drawn to ordain gay and lesbian persons into ministry in those places. This church has now said we affirm that as being from the Spirit and able to be trusted.”

In the sermon, Barbara Lundblad spoke of the connection to be made between the Paul the Apostle and Lydia and the laborers paid as generously at the end of the day as those working from the first (Acts 16:11–15; Matthew 20:1–16). Paul’s search near Philippi for a place of prayer (*proseuche* in Greek) ended in a place where people were gathered, because where there are those who pray is a house of prayer. She said places of prayer, places people gather to pray, cannot be expelled or sanctioned. St. Francis, First United and St. Paul-Reformation remain places of prayer to this day. She reminded us that we carry with us the memories of those, no longer with us, lost to the church but not to Christ, like Joel Workin, and remember the actions of Pastor Jim DeLange and Paul Tidemann, still with us, led by the Spirit to courageously accept these three as fellow pastors. The assembled rose in a standing ovation. Reflecting on the Gospel text, she marked that God, like the parable landowner, is more generous than sensible, paying all who do the work of God the same. God’s abundant love is that you, we, all are welcomed into this church.

Anita Hill said of the day and the reception onto the roster, “It’s a day that I thought in 1985 might come in 1995, it’s a day that I thought in 1995 might come by 2005, and by the time the vote was taken in 2009 it was a big surprise to me because I thought I’d be retired and gone before that happens. It’s a delight to be here on a day when reception is going to happen.”

Ruth Frost said, “This service today signifies a joyful new beginning in the relation between gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and the ELCA. Discrimination wounds both parties, those being discriminated against and those charged with enforcing discriminatory policies. Together we are being freed to meet again in the wide embrace of God’s welcome. Today we stand face to face, seeing each other with new eyes and open hearts.



DAVID MATENAER

Tomorrow we shall stand shoulder to shoulder regarding the world's needs, instead of our own divisions."

Phyllis Zillhart said, "This joyous day manifests the incarnation of God's justice-love for all people. Hopeful hands extended in ordinations 20 years ago in San Francisco and 11 years later here in St. Paul are now joined in prayers of welcome and celebration. May the ELCA embody Christ's radical love for all people, including LGBT people, our allies, families and all who are searching: young people searching for authenticity in action, for immigrants seeking welcome, for the poor seeking food and shelter, and for the dying and their families yearning for the presence of grace and dignity, this is an historic day of welcome, where the doors are open, and I rejoice."

Pastor Anita Hill serves as co-pastor at St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Pastor Ruth Frost at the Hospice of the Twin Cities and Pastor Phyllis Zillhart at the Fairview Home Care and Hospice, the latter two in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Jen Nagel Received into the Roster of Ordained Pastors in the ELCA

"Christ attracted an assorted crowd, too." That's what the tagline says on the worship bulletins at Salem English Lutheran Church, where we gathered on Sunday, September 26, to celebrate Rev. Jen Nagel's seven years of ministry and to formally recognize her reception onto the clergy roster of the ELCA. "Assorted" is an apt description of the folks seen threading their way to Sunday worship through the eclectic Uptown neighborhood of Minneapolis, walking across a rubble-strewn parking lot and then through a door painted flat-black like the rest of the wall it opens. Salem's door would be almost invisible had it not been marked with the words "Welcome Here" in very large, bold paint. This is a congregation where welcoming is highlighted and takes center-stage.

Like many ELCA congregations in urban areas, Salem is too small to maintain the large sanctuary built by its forebears and has had to find alternative spaces for worship. Currently, the congregation uses a theater auditorium housed in a multidisciplinary, community-based arts center. While the congregation is several years into redevelopment plans for its original building and site, and is eagerly awaiting its completion, this theater space nevertheless seems fitting for a congregation dedicated to telling the story of Christ. Out of the darkness, there is a light ... and ... action!

Salem English is a remarkable congregation in many ways, not the least of which is the depth of its dedication to ministering in, to, and with the community in which it is planted, even in the face of enormous urban changes. As Jen said, "When I became Salem's pastoral leader in 2003 and when they voted to call me as their pastor in 2007, it's been the courageous, bold, Spirit-led actions of this gutsy



Bishop Johnson preaches at Jen Nagel's Rite of Reception.

congregation in the lead. I am grateful that we can celebrate this milestone, knowing still that there is much more justice to come. I'm also grateful to a cloud of witnesses who are part of this Kairos time: those praying, organizing, voting, and implementing the policies, and those who have risked and given to see God's reign."

Ordained as pastor at Salem Lutheran in January 2008, Jen had actually served as the pastoral leader for the congregation since July 2003. Jen has a Master of Divinity degree from the University of Chicago-Divinity School, completed work at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and Concordia College,

"Assorted" is an apt description of the folks... This is a congregation where *welcoming* is highlighted and takes *center stage*.

Moorhead, Minnesota. Prior to Salem Lutheran, she served in Minneapolis at Central Lutheran Church and the Hennepin County Medical Center. She has also previously served in Africa, Chicago, Michigan, and outdoor ministry settings.

Jen's ordination was an act of ecclesial disobedience at the time. Her ordination was referred to as an "extraordinary" ordination in that it occurred outside the normal practice of the ELCA and was not recognized. At the service on September 26, the ELCA officially recognized her ordination and ministry.

One this day at Salem, tradition lived comfortably side by side with fresh approaches reflecting the experiences and character of the congregation. A jazz combo offered music for the prelude, followed by choral hymns. The day's liturgical texts were drawn from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, with the ELCA's Rite of Reception incorporated into what was otherwise a regular communion Sunday at Salem.

The reception rite was conducted by Rev. Craig Johnson, bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, who

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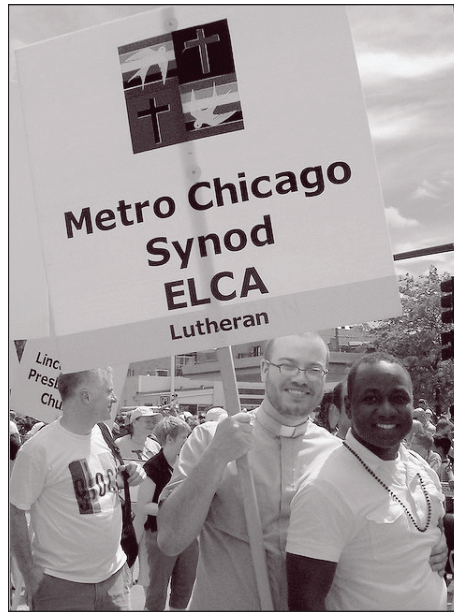
ELM Pastors

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also preached the sermon, drawing from the lectionary for the day (Amos 6 and Luke 16). Bishop Johnson spoke about the tension that arises when we ignore injustice. This tension can easily lead us to become dismissive of the poor and oppressed. They inconvenience us, which makes us angry. We want them to get out of our way so we can go about our business unchallenged. Such has been the case for many LGBT people for a long time, he said. But the ELCA is the better for having made to decision to no longer ignore this injustice.

During the reception rite, Bishop Johnson placed his hands on Jen's head as he spoke the text that officially recognizes Jen as a member of the clergy roster of the ELCA. Later, he ceremoniously signed the original letter of call issued by the congregation but left unsigned until policy change became a reality. "I've had this piece of paper in my file for a long time," he said, to laughter and applause.

The Rite of Reception for Rev. Jen Nagel was clearly a happy day for Salem English Lutheran Church as well as for many others in the ELCA. But the policy changes of August 2009 and the implementation of those changes over the last year also point back to a history of sadness and struggle. Speaking with reporters from Minnesota Public Radio, Jen said "I've experienced renewed, reaffirmed freedom and hope in the church in the Spirit's movement. This hasn't, however, been without grief—grief for the divisions and fears that seem so prevalent, and grief for the many, many



Erik Christensen and Kerry Jenkins represent Metro Chicago Synod.

colleagues and others who didn't get to see this day. Many left the denomination, some left the church, some died or committed suicide, and some have simply become too weary. Along with all the joy, I've also gone through my own grieving over this long and sometimes painful journey."

Erik Christensen Received into the Roster of Ordained Pastors in the ELCA

The Celebration of the Holy Eucharist with Reception to the Roster of Ordained Ministers held in Ebenezer Lutheran Church, a long-time Reconciling in Christ Congregation, was simply and profoundly as advertised: a celebration of Eucharist; a deep occasion for thanksgiving; a reception of the gifts for ministry, which had already been given to God's glory by a partnered gay pastor.

Freshly cut evergreen branches sprinkled renewing, healing baptismal waters, following a poignant cello and organ prelude acknowledging the past out of which this new day has finally come. This day we could more fully enter the church singing "All are Welcome." Members of St. Luke's in Logan Square, where Pastor Christensen has served for four years, offered gifts as musicians and worship leaders. The presenter was the 88-year-old adopted grandmother from Pastor Christensen's internship congregation in Iowa who had wondered if she'd ever see this day in her lifetime. Erik's partner, Kerry Jenkins, a host of family, friends, colleagues, representatives of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries and

Lutherans Concerned/North America, and the church assembled, gathered in the warmth of the Ebenezer sanctuary in love and praise.

Bishop Wayne Miller of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod preached on the theme of something new, old, borrowed and blue! The gifts and faithfulness of ministries of LGBT persons in our church, the ministry served by Pastor Christensen at St. Luke's, are of old. The something borrowed the bishop pointed to included his cross, inscribed with the names of predecessors and someday his successors, the cloud of apostolic witnesses whose strength we borrow and pass on for the sake of the gospel. But on the minds of many was the prophetic borrowing of authority from the future, the future of this very day, that had undergirded the calls of these congregations and the extraordinary ordinations that echoed through this celebration.

The "something blue" was Bishop Miller's advent stole, symbolizing the early dawn and birth of hope. On the hearts of many present were those who hadn't lived to this dawn, but had labored toward it. Pastor Christensen, in his address after reception, placed this dawn for the church in a much broader context of hope. He lifted up the hope that the lives of homeless LBGTQ youth, and those who felt the only way out of the bullying and rejection was suicide, would be changed by this church's actions. He expressed the desire that the new of this day would be good news not just in this small circle, but that the mission released as we left this Eucharistic table would reach into the places where the message of God's love and welcome for all were most desperately needed.

In Pastor Christensen's study hangs a new print from the St. John's Bible. A gift from his parents to mark the day, it depicts the witness of the Acts 4 church, those gathered as believers with one heart, one soul, caring for all out of goods held in common. It recounts the great power with which the apostles gave testimony to Jesus' resurrection. It may be coincidental, but in the past month, the pastor's study had been moved across the hall. The old study was barely bigger than a closet. Today the pastor's study at St. Luke's is light, open, and spacious. Coincidental or not, the space inhabited by this pastor is new, enlarged, generous... an expanded basis for mission. The Rev. Erik Christensen is a rostered pastor in the ELCA. ▼

Worship Resources are now available.

RIC Sunday is Jan. 30, 2011

RIC Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate the witness of God's love for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities. It's a time to highlight what it means to live a theology of reconciliation.



For more info and to download resources, go to: www.lcna.org/ric/ric-sunday-and-pride-sunday.

Training Brings New Sense of Hope

Reflections on Building an Inclusive Church Training, Spokane, Washington by **Cherie Stevens**, Idaho Falls, Idaho

I'd been wanting to attend this training for several years, and so was very excited to learn that there would be a training session in September, 2010, in Spokane Washington, a mere eight-hour

drive away from my home in Idaho Falls, Idaho! The training far exceeded my

expectations. The church that our family had called "home" for some 34 years had just taken the second vote to leave the ELCA as a result of the Churchwide Assembly policy decisions in 2009, so I was dealing with a myriad of emotions and feeling pretty fragile.

reconnecting with friends who all share a **passion** for **justice** in the church

Our family is so proud of the ELCA for becoming more inclusive of LGBT Christians, but the fallout of losing our church home has been significant. This made the Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) training seem like a homecoming of sorts with an opportunity to be with others who do the work for full inclusion in the church across denominations. I learned great techniques related to storytelling, relationship building, congregational assessments and much more from trainers Ross Murray and



Wayne and Cherie Stevens are active organizers for LC/NA in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Lauren Wendt.

Hearing family stories from Paul Jolly, LC/NA's Region 1 Coordinator, and Karen Jolly, Secretary to the Board, family was inspirational as we later shared our own stories in small groups. Meeting new people and reconnecting with friends who all share a passion for justice in the church was heartwarming, and I felt truly embraced by all who were there.

Worship with our host congregation on Sunday morning provided a time of joy and reflection. The ritual that closed the BIC training, in which we all described what we took from the training and what we would bring to the work for full inclusion of GLBT Christians, was particularly meaningful for me. I left Spokane with a sense of hope for the formation of a new ELCA faith community in Idaho Falls that will truly be inclusive of all of God's children. ▼

New Lutheran Volunteer Corps member serving LC/NA



Having grown up in the ELCA, **Emily Hamilton** is thrilled to be working with Lutherans Concerned/North America to make the church she loves a more welcoming place. Born and raised in Rochester, N.Y., Emily spent a lot of her childhood at Sunday school, youth group and children's choirs at Incarnate Word Lutheran Church. After her graduation from a Roman Catholic high school, she attended Vassar College where the English department scared her off, but the religion department welcomed her with open arms. Most of her studies focused around religious theory, Islam, and music performance and history. She also found time in college to sing a cappella, take piano lessons, worship with the Episcopalians and participate in her campus LGBT activism groups' fundraising, protests, lobby days and awareness-raising campaigns. During the summers she worked at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center, first as a camp counselor and later as a program coordinator.

Frustrated with the sexism and heterosexism she encountered at high school, camp and college, Emily applied to the Lutheran Volunteer Corps hoping to work for social justice on behalf of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and found a good match with LC/NA. During her year with Lutherans Concerned, she'll be working with the Reconciling in Christ program; the Youth, Young Adult and Family Committee; and social media (see @lcna on Twitter; Lutherans Concerned/North America page on Facebook; and lutheransconcerned on Blogspot), and other projects as they appear. When she's not at work, she enjoys getting to know her housemates, exploring St. Paul, playing Bananagrams, reading novels and watching Glee.

In **Memory** of Howard Erickson

Howard Erickson, a founding member and the first paid staff of Lutherans Concerned/North America (LC/NA), editor of *The Gay Lutheran* newsletter (later the *Concord*),

newspaperman, and lay preacher, died early during the morning of Friday, September 24 of stroke and heart attack. He was 73.

A memorial service for Howard was held on Tuesday, September 28, at Hollywood Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, California.

In 1974, Howard gathered with Allen Blach, Diane Fraser, Marie Kent, and Jim Lokken in a room on the University of Minnesota campus and, in a weekend, formed the organization “Lutherans Concerned for Gay People,” later to be named Lutherans Concerned/North American. He was the only paid staff that Lutherans Concerned had for many years and was active in the national organization through 1980. Up until his death, he was active in the Los Angeles chapter.

Emily Eastwood, Executive Director of LC/NA, remembers him this way: “Howard Erickson was a man of courage, strong will, and equally firm opinions, which he generously shared with me from the first time I met him in my official capacity with LC/NA. To the end he was a newspaperman true to

arms of the God who made him, loved unconditionally with an extravagant grace that both he and we cannot fully imagine.”

Howard was a driving force in his assisted-living home in Glendale, California, organizing Sunday afternoon ecumenical worship services for the residents. For more than four years, Howard conducted those services and served as lay preacher.

Howard maintained a keen interest in racial reconciliation, and always participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. observance among the Lutheran churches in Los Angeles. He organized and trained the lectors at Hollywood Lutheran Church, lining up volunteers weeks in advance. As recently as September 12, he was part of a duet, which sang during worship. He was a constant presence in the congregation’s mid-week Bible studies and was persistent and persuasive in his rock-solid grasp of the Lutheran central article of faith: justification by grace through faith.

Rev. Dan Hooper, Howard’s pastor at Hollywood Lutheran, said: “For all who have known Howard in his long and faithful lifetime, we understand what it means to say he was a ‘real character.’ But, along with his colorful and at times intemperate personality, Howard has been a genuine, faithful and grateful child of God. I first met Howard at a church convention of the South Pacific District of the former ALC in 1975. From the outset of the struggle and movement for the rights and dignity of sexual minorities, he was a rock of confidence that the institutional church was not going to drive him or any of us away, and that — with enough education and persistence — Lutherans

He was **proud** of our **mission**...to create change in the **church** we love. Concerned was

going to change the church for the better. I am glad he was able to live long enough to see the fruit of his life’s mission, as the ELCA now openly welcomes LGBT people and has removed the institutional obstacles to gay and lesbian people serving on its professional rosters.”

his notepad, typewriter, and pen scratch. Ours was the correspondence of another era, sparsely shared at a welcome pace. His interests, however, were in no way antiquated. A founder of LC/NA, and, in many ways the keeper of our early institutional memory, he was never content with the notion that LC/NA should be only a sanctuary for LGBT Lutherans. Rather, he told me how excited he was with the growth of LC/NA as an organization. He was proud of our mission, which he said had been that of the original founders, to create change in the church we love.

“Howard was quirky and lovable in his own way. His frank stubbornness, along with that of the Rev. Jim Lokken, who died four years ago almost to the day, and the Rev. Chuck Lewis, who remains active in the leadership of the San Francisco/Bay Area chapter of LC/NA, kept the organization going and communicating through the early days. Howard wrote and produced the “Gay Lutheran,” the first newsletter of LC/NA. I remember receiving my first copy when I joined by mail in 1979. As a closeted would-be pastor in south Texas, that newsletter was a lifeline for me, as I suspect it was to countless others. I give thanks to God for the life, passion, and gifts of Howard Erickson. LC/NA would not be what it is today without his contributions. Howard died in the

concerned was going to change the church for the better. I am glad he was able to live long enough to see the fruit of his life’s mission, as the ELCA now openly welcomes LGBT people and has removed the institutional obstacles to gay and lesbian people serving on its professional rosters.”

Jeannine Janson, member of St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco, California, recounts her time spent with Howard: “I had the pleasure of working with Howard in 2008 while preparing the first installment of LC/NA’s history, “Lutherans Concerned for Gay People, The Beginning.” We spent several hours on the phone one day, with Howard dictating his input and me typing. Howard did not use e-mail.”

Janson reports that one of the many interesting things Howard talked about was the first logo for Lutherans Concerned, the Lutheran Rose. Howard advised that the Lutheran Rose was chosen because, “We wanted something that said, ‘We are Lutheran, we are not outside the church, this is our church, too.’” Further, the Lutheran Rose used for the newsletter was sliced out from a book Howard purchased at Augsburg Publishing, specifically to get the Lutheran Rose for the newsletter.

Howard faithfully edited, produced, and mailed the newsletter in the early years. Although the

organization was founded in 1974, the first Assembly of members was not held until 1978. “I know the newsletter contributed greatly to the continued existence and growth of the organization,” said Janson. “It kept the first members and chapters informed and connected.”

When she asked Howard what he thought about the early survival and then longevity of Lutherans Concerned, he said, “Chalk that up to the Holy Spirit.”

LC/NA offers condolences to friends, family, and all who mourn the loss of Howard Erickson. He will be deeply missed. ▼

“In Honor of...”

In Honor of...

Honored by...

Tammy Aaberg & the Aaberg family	In honor of Tammy Aaberg & the Aaberg family	Christopher E. Wogaman
Kim Beckmann	In honor of the ministry of Pastor Kim Beckmann, who has made safe space in our Church for me for a long time!	Ruth Almen
Adam Bost	In honor of Adam Bost, a great son and friend	Sharon & John Bost
Robert E. Bowman	In memory of Robert E. Bowman	Bob & Martha Eastwood
Sheri Brown	To God's Spirit moving within Sheri Brown	Rev. Kirk E. Anderson
Joe Brown	In memory of Joe Brown	Mike Crandall
Joanie Curtin	In honor of Joanie Curtin	Lore M. Dickey, M.A.
William Duff	In honor of William Duff	Judith A Bunker
Emily Eastwood	In honor of Emily Eastwood for her dedication in LC/NA	Virginia Balter; Revs. Ann Tiemeyer & Thomas Taylor
Emily Eastwood	In honor of Emily Eastwood and the faithful staff of LC/NA	Cheryl A. Persigehl
Robert Matthew Eastwood	In memory of Robert Matthew Eastwood	Robert & Martha Eastwood, Deanna Eichler & Leslee Froehlich; Martha L. Scheel; Deborah Wilson
Roberto Flores	In honor of Father Roberto Flores	Kenneth E. Rozek
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
Anita Hill, Ruth Frost & Phyllis Zillhart	In honor of Anita Hill, Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart	Anonymous
James Curtis Hill	In memory of my brother, James C. Hill, Sr. of Topsham, Maine	Rev. Anita Hill; Bailey & Emily Eastwood
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
Marie Kent and Nancy Lewis	In memory of Marie Kent and Nancy Lewis	Crystal Anne Schrader
Hannah Kreider	In honor of Hannah Kreider	Kim S. Kreider
LGBTQI teens	For all LGBTQI teens and young people that they might know that God is a God of love...	John Sunderman
Jim Lokken	In memory of The Rev. Jim Lokken	Mary Farmer
The staff of LC/NA	The staff of LC/NA: rockstars who work for justice and full participation in our church	Jason Chesnut
Lauren & Michelle Morse-Wendt	In honor of the wedding of Lauren & Michelle Morse-Wendt	Jonathan Flak & Cheryl Persigehl
Don Pearson	In memory of Don Pearson, fearless witness to the extravagant love of God!	Rev. Rachel M. Mithelman
Mary Peterson & Mary Beth Weaver	In honor of the marriage of Mary Peterson & Mary Beth Weaver	Karen & Paul Jolly
Vaughn Roste	In honor of our wonderful son Vaughn Roste	Revs. Rita & Darryl Roste
Sheri and Kirk	In honor of the work of friends Sheri and Kirk	John Jorde
Donna Simon	In honor of Donna Simon!	Pamela Sieving
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
Harry Wick	In honor of Harry Wick, who lived too early to see the great changes in the ELCA. Bless his name!	Patti P. Maguire
Jay Wiesner and Steve Keiser	In honor of Pastors Jay Wiesner and Steve Keiser's upcoming reception onto the ELCA Clergy roster—and in THANKS for this great opportunity to pick Pastor Chris's pocket!!!	Martha L. Scheel
	In honor of my very creative son	Anonymous
	In honor of the ELCA community in Idaho Falls, Idaho	Wayne & Cherie Stevens
	In honor of all my LGBT friends who strive to answer the call God has given them	Meredith McGrath

Believe Out Loud

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change as they challenge oppression of all kinds, even in the face of strong resistance.

Lutherans had several opportunities to meet as a group – for social and debriefing purposes, for worship, and for a caucus. Ross Murray, LC/NA deputy director, noted at the caucus that after a major victory such as last year's Churchwide Assembly actions, "there is always a danger of losing momentum." He said Lutherans Concerned is focused on deepening and expanding the RIC program, working to see ELCA policy transformed into practice, and "changing the world." LC/NA "does not aspire to become a desk within the ELCA," he said, but needs to figure out how to effectively and authentically evangelize to those seeking a spiritual home. A specific goal is to double the number of individuals signed on as Reconciling Lutherans. (The list and an electronic registration

Many participants at the event were encouraged to make calls of support for the LGBT movement.



form are on the LC/NA Web site, www.lcna.org.)

Just before closing worship, attendees gathered by region; within some regional gatherings subgroups formed. At a meeting of Florida folks, Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida (www.eqfl.org), talked about efforts to promote legalization of adoption by gays and lesbians in the state. She said public opinion is in harmony with a recent court ruling that the 33-year-old law banning such adoptions – the only one of its kind in the nation – is unconstitutional. (The next day the head of the state Department of Children and Families announced that his agency would not appeal the ruling, in effect ending the ban at this time.) But Smith warned that opponents are expected to mount efforts to put a referendum on the ballot in 2012 to make a ban part

The first advanced skills leadership training for interdenominational faith-based community by the NGLTF

of the state constitution. Acting on the theme of the summit, members of LC/NA and other faith affiliations indicated interest in joining with Equality Florida in a campaign to discredit such efforts.

The Believe Out Loud Power Summit was the first advanced skills leadership training planned by the welcoming church program leaders, with the support of the Institute for Welcoming Resources and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. For more coverage of the summit, check the institute Web site: www.welcomingresources.org. ▼

Notes from the International Program Committee (IPC)

The focus of LCNA's International Programs Committee (IPC) is summarized in the IPC mission statement, provided here as a reminder:

In support of the mission of Lutherans Concerned/North America (LC/NA)— which advocates the acceptance and full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, their families, friends and allies into the congregational and organization life of the Christian Church— the International Program of LC/NA offers support, collaboration, and liaison on GLBT issues internationally within the Lutheran communion and its ecumenical and global partners. The IP is partnered with the other ministries of LC/NA and is set within a theological concept of accompaniment. Accompaniment is based on the mutual respect and solidarity of the companions and emphasizes relationship before resources.

Primary Strategy for Biennium

Having reached policy change within the ELCA in 2009, LC/NA stands in a pivotal, if not even fulcrum position, one in which we

are called to address LGBT issues and other aspects of oppression on a global basis. Certainly this does not mean that we are in any way finished with domestic issues, but since the inception of the IPC, moving into the international arena has been seen as a part of our vision.

How are we to do this? We need to recognize the limited resources we have as well as our comparative advantage. In summary, the focus of the IPC strategy for coming biennium for the IPC will be four-fold: (i) strengthening the existing IP relationships, including those with the European Forum, (ii) evolving a relationship with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, (iii) exploring ways to enable our RIC congregations to support such ELCA programming as the synodical and congregational "Sister Programs" to advance international openness to RIC/Welcoming approaches, and (iv) identifying subsequent targets for a "rolling" strategic plan for the IPC.

If you are interested in working with the IPC, please contact Philip Moeller, International Program Director, pwmoller@aol.com