



RECONCILING WORKS 2012 **ASSEMBLY**

ReconcilingWorks Meets, Inspires for the Future

Reconciling Works 2012, the biennial assembly of ReconcilingWorks and national convention of the Reconciling in Christ program, met in Washington D.C. from July 6–10. We were inspired, uplifted, informed, and brought into new community. We worshiped, sang, studied scripture, and made plans for renewed efforts in support of full inclusion. More than 200 people attended the various pre-events, plenary sessions, workshops, worship services, business meetings, and entertainment during the gathering. Read on for all the details of the plenary sessions—and see the other articles in this issue for coverage of keynote speakers, award honorees, Bible studies, and “Lutheran Day on the Hill.”

Leadership Changes

Election of New Board

A new board of directors was elected, comprised of four new members and eight members from the previous board.

Demographically, six self-identify as male and six as female; they come from six of the ELCA regions and Canada, with a wide and rich range of experience, talents, and skills. For more information about the new board or

to contact them, see board of directors under *About ReconcilingWorks* on www.ReconcilingWorks.org.

Resolutions

Cycle Change from 2- to 3-year

Our constitution sets both the cycle between assemblies and term of office of the board of directors at two years. Both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) have already voted at one of each of their national gatherings to change their constitutions to go to a three-year cycle for assemblies. The required second votes are scheduled at their respective national gatherings in 2013. Both church bodies are expected to pass the change, making their next gatherings happen in 2016 as a result.

continued on page 5

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Speakers Illuminate the Assembly Theme

Some of the major highlights of the assembly were the keynote speeches and sermons delivered by prominent members within the organization and from the broader Lutheran community.

Opening of the Assembly

Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,



delivered the keynote address, which came at the official beginning of the assembly.

Hanson's presence and address at the assembly were historic for ReconcilingWorks because it was the first time in the organization's history that a head of a Lutheran church body had been a keynote speaker at its assembly. The announcement of this fact by Executive Director Emily Eastwood prompted a standing ovation, even before Hanson spoke. The audience rose to its feet during sustained applause two more times for Hanson's speech as assembly participants recognized the significance of his presence and major role at the assembly.

Hanson spoke in broad terms about the mission of the ELCA. He said the strength of the church comes from its unity in the midst

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson addresses the assembly with keynote speech.

of its diversity. “I am so grateful for the church we are today—a church committed to welcoming all while valuing our differences and respecting diversity,” Hanson said. “Through this unity in diversity we show forth the body of Christ.”

Hanson also focused directly on the persistence and resolute, but graceful, engagement of ReconcilingWorks. “I am also

continued on page 8

INSIDE

- 2 From the Executive Director
- 3 International Program Committee Update
- 4 RIC Corner
- 9 Reconciling Works 2012 Photos
- 12 Day on the Hill
- 14 Siefkes, Lifetime Achievement Awards
- 15 ELCA Synod Assembly Report
- 16 Translutherans Proclaimed as new Affinity Group
- 17 When Faith, Hope & Love are All You've Got
- 18 ELCA Youth Gathering
- 19 Receiving Hospitality
- 20 Regional News



EMILY EASTWOOD

Youth and Young Adults: The Church Right Now

At *ReconcilingWorks 2012*, our youth and young adult delegation prepared a panel presentation to tell their stories as one of sixteen workshop offerings. As usual, at the time the workshop was to begin I was talking with participants in the church's lobby area and checking in with staff members and volunteers on various issues. I have not actually been able to partake of workshop opportunities at one of these events in years. Suddenly, one of the young adults ran down the stairs, breathlessly saying that she was looking for "human beings." Trying not to sound alarmed, I said matter-of-factly, "I am a human being, what's up?" She replied that the workshop had only drawn the youth and young adults themselves. If no one else came, they would be telling their stories, again, to each other, for the second time. So, up the stairs we went to listen and learn.

I thought I was adequately prepared for what I would hear. After all, I've been doing this work as a professional for ten years. I wasn't. In an hour and a half my reality was changed. My perception of our progress was corrected abruptly by the living truth told by

teens and early twenty-somethings still enduring rejection and bullying the likes of which I never knew. Stories came of parents refusing to allow a child to eat with the family after coming out, of physical attacks by bullies, of school-sanctioned bullying that blamed the victim again and again. Continued church-based rejection, rural isolation, confusion, self-destructive behaviors, and sexual violence put more than a healthy dent in my practiced exterior.

The protector in me wanted to scream "FIRE" and insert myself between these

If they choose to trust us with their presence, their stories, and their dreams, it is our duty to be worthy of that trust.

young people and the danger they faced, some of them every day. I wanted to get out my best rhetoric, my shoe or my sword and do battle on their behalf. How small and insignificant the perceived success of anti-bullying memorials passed at the churchwide assembly in 2011 now seemed. Their lived realities simply overcame my

perceptions because I was captured by their stories well told, their faces often downturned as they revealed the dangers that had proven so very real.

And then, to a person, faces upturned and engaging, each young adult continued with stories of faith and hope in action. We heard about Believe in Me, an anti-bullying project started by a 15-year-old tormented by other kids out of wearing his favorite baby-blue tennis shoes. There were two stories of the saving grace of Lutheran-based summer camps for LGBT teens. One young adult found a church that became home when she had none. Several offered real hope for the ELCA Youth Gathering and our work there. Though their life experiences could have paralyzed, these wounded healers were suddenly filled with a light-ness. Their call was clear in that moment. They were willing to become reformers. Creative, faithful young Lutherans were already changing those who had ears to hear. They acted not by

force of will, but through the clarity of their witness to the dangers that had befallen them, and, more, through their hope-filled response to God-given lives of authenticity. They acted because of their faith in Jesus Christ and the possibilities for a world where all are welcomed, embraced, accepted, and honored not in spite of who they are, but because they are beloved.

I was stunned and sobered by the presentation. I asked if they would be willing to present their workshop following the healing service that evening so that many more assembly participants could listen and be changed, like me. They agreed.

That night, worship continued until everyone who wished had lit candles or experienced an anointing with oil and prayers for healing. The ebb and flow of harmonies from the communities of Taizé and Iona created a peaceful and yet evocative presence of spiritual connection. Tears flowed freely and without shame for many, regardless of age. When the final Amen had been said, the young people took their places and began their stories. As I had done, listeners sat in rapt attention, lending their faithful presence and energy to those who shared so much of themselves with courage, wit, and determination. It was a Holy and wholly intentional time of healing.

Youth and Young Adult Convocation present a powerful, moving panel discussion.



RIC Settings Added to the Roster since last issue

Atonement Lutheran Church, Asbury Park, New Jersey

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Holmes Beach, Florida

IndyVision, Indianapolis, Indiana

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Gladstone, Oregon

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

From that evening we moved to our Day on the Hill, where these youth and young adults played a major role. And then on to New Orleans and the ELCA Youth Gathering where anti-bullying hit the main stage, as well as our interactive display, workshops by the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute under contract with ReconcilingWorks, and Bishop Hanson's own words to those assembled. Our young staff turned their private pain into public action reaching some 15,000 junior and senior high school youth and their advisors and chaperones. 15,000 conversations! Never have we made such a big difference to so many in so short a time. I am so very proud of our team: Emily

Hamilton (team leader, from New York), Tim Feiertag (senior staff on site, from Missouri), Kurt Neumann (operations staff, from Texas), Charlette Beckler (board member, from Texas), Travis Van Horn (summer intern), and Sarah Leonard (volunteer, from Michigan). "Thank-you" just doesn't cover the magnitude of the gifts given by these six people to our organization, to the youth and adults they encountered, and to the whole church.

The young people who participated in *ReconcilingWorks 2012* and on our behalf at the Youth Gathering are not the future of the church. They are the church right now. Their faith, courage, and determination are infectious. They want to make a difference so that no young person has to endure what they have. They are coming out as allies or LGBTQ at younger and younger ages, which places them at early and greater risk than those of us who shrouded our identities and tried, often in vain, to fit into shoes that were not of our choosing.

For those of us who are older than 25, I believe our job is to protect and mentor our young people as if they were our own children, which does not mean to initiate them into what it means to be LGBTQ or an ally or even an adult according to our own life experiences. It doesn't mean to coddle them, but to empower them to make good decisions for themselves and to support them in their efforts for the sake of the world. Their

cultural contexts and ours are changing faster than most of us can keep up with. If they choose to trust us with their presence, their stories, and their dreams, it is our duty to be worthy of that trust. I pray daily now for our young people that they may know only welcome, safety, support and accountability in love. They dream a world as it should be and are willing to act to make it so. Amen. Let it be so. ■

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International Program Committee (IPC) Update

Reconciling Works 2012 brings movement on strategic involvement

It was an exciting assembly. "Change the church, change the world, change the church," was voiced by many. Based on workshops and formal and informal meetings, participants were able to give voice to a new strategic direction. The International Program Committee (IPC) of ReconcilingWorks will refine these discussions in collaboration with the Executive Director under whose portfolio the IPC falls. Key to our discussions was the participation of representatives from Latin America and the European Forum.

We also recognized the new Memorandum of Understanding signed with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries of Cape Town, South Africa. Greetings were sent in advance to the IPC by the International Commission for Gay and Lesbian Human Rights. The challenge is great but we now have an international image! As you all know, in advocacy, when given an opportunity, seize it, and seize we shall. More details on our strategic directions will be reported after the drafting has progressed.

Participation in the International AIDS Conference in July has furthered our image. The Executive Director participated in a variety of activities and worked the groups well at the

Ecumenical Pre-Conference and the Director of the IPC was busy there as well as in the main conference. ReconcilingWorks was also a supporter of the Spirit of 76, which brought 26 people to the two conferences from countries where homosexuality is criminalized. The participants were greeted by a representative from the State Department and invited to meet with one of the Vice-Presidents of the World Bank. They return home newly informed and networked for future work as a community.

Elsewhere, there is good news that the proposed anti-gay law [8711] in Ukraine has been shelved but could come back for a vote in September. Rather festively, we can report the Pink Dot Event in Singapore on June 30th in which about 15,000 people gathered to promote the acceptance of the LGBT community. The candles, lanterns, balloons, and T-shirts really did produce a large pink glow in a central downtown park. Quite a few participants brought their puppies along, but none were dyed pink! Instrumental in this event was our friend, Bishop Kim Hao Yap, who has attended two of our assemblies in the past. The Director of the IPC has been invited to return to preach in Bishop Yap's congregation.

—Philip W. Moeller, PhD., Director of International Programs

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Fairview, North Carolina

Congregation considered many facets of welcoming.

BY CAROL M. DUNN

The congregation's new logo is an outward and visible sign that Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Fairview, North Carolina, is now an RIC congregation, only one of five in the entire state. The logo illustrates that God loves all people: no limits. A cross is at the center, with a circle of different colored beads surrounding it, representing attributes like age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and life circumstances, and to the side, the words "United in Christ. Welcoming All." (See logo in box at center.)

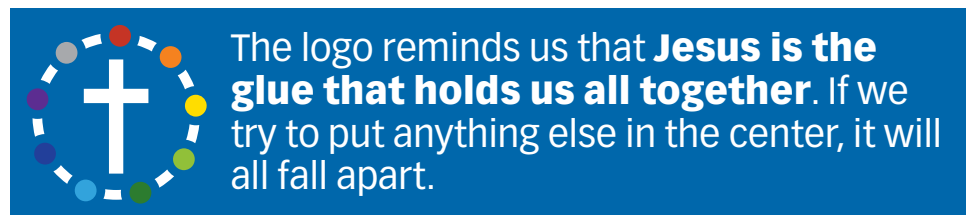
The Rev. David Eck, pastor at Abiding Savior, says "The logo reminds us that Jesus is the glue that holds us all together. If we try to put anything else in the center, it will all fall apart." Abiding Savior is a small, active, service-oriented church near Asheville, with several projects to spread the Word and to help people in need in Buncombe County. Ministries include feeding the homeless in nearby downtown Asheville, building a Habitat for Humanity house with other Lutheran churches, and supporting the anti-cancer effort Relay for Life. The church is located on the Charlotte Highway, about 3.5 miles from the Interstate 40/U.S. 74-A interchange. It draws worshipers from throughout the county. The wall of the sanctuary behind the altar features what would be a rose window if it had stained glass. Instead, it is sparkling clear glass and looks out onto the mountainside, providing a serene natural backdrop to worship.

"It took us a bit of time to get everyone on the same page as far as understanding what it means to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation—what that looks like, and why the designation is important," said Jennifer Ownbey, 11-year member of Abiding Savior.

Some of the congregation on Pentecost, celebrating the unanimous RIC decision.



She said that, as with many congregations, most members felt they were already behaving as an RIC congregation should: "welcoming and affirming to anyone who walked through the door." It became a process," said Ownbey, "to make sure everyone understood why we needed to



finish the work and receive the designation." Ownbey has served as a member of the congregation council and several committees, as well of the Task Force that led the congregation's RIC study.

The congregation considered many facets of welcoming, concluding with the broad list of things to include in the logo. Members of the congregation explained in temple talks and discussions why the designation was important, and Pr. Eck led Bible studies. (Pr. Eck may be known to Lutherans who have attended Churchwide assemblies in 2005 or 2009 for his leadership in informal singing in Goodsoil groups and for writing the daily devotions for the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly booklet. He is a gifted writer of liturgy and music who often plays his guitar as part of the worship service.)

"I'm excited about the renewed vision we have for our church. It's a challenging way to do community, but I wouldn't have it any other way," Eck said. "I believe our diversity enriches us as a community of faith. We learn so much more from people who are different than we do from those who are the same."

Several changes have occurred as a result



Abiding Savior members showed concern for their community with participation in the annual Relay for Life in Buncombe County.

of the work members have done. A few people have left, believing the congregation was going in the "wrong direction." New faces have appeared since the official RIC announcement. The former two-worship service schedule, differing especially in liturgical and musical styles, has been converted to a single service, making the congregation feel more of a single worshipping body. And they are redeveloping

their wedding policies to make them friendlier to same-gender couples who may wish to make a public profession of their commitment to one another.

A majority of Abiding Savior's membership is heterosexual, but the church has welcomed out LGBT members for years. Church leaders expect that the RIC designation will attract LGBT people looking for a welcoming congregation and others who wish to worship in a non-discriminatory church.

Abiding Savior made its unanimous RIC commitment in the spring, and celebrated on Pentecost. ■

Upcoming "Becoming an Inclusive Church" Trainings

October 25-27, 2012
Grand Rapids, Michigan

November 3, 2012
Olympia, Washington

November 8-10, 2012
Pella, Iowa

Business of the Future

continued from page 1

Like them, only our assembly can change our constitution. In anticipation of the cycle for national church meetings changing in 2013, our assembly passed contingent legislation changing our constitution automatically to a three-year cycle if the churches do, which would move our next assembly to 2015. All the members of the board of directors elected at this assembly were aware of the potential change to a three-year cycle.

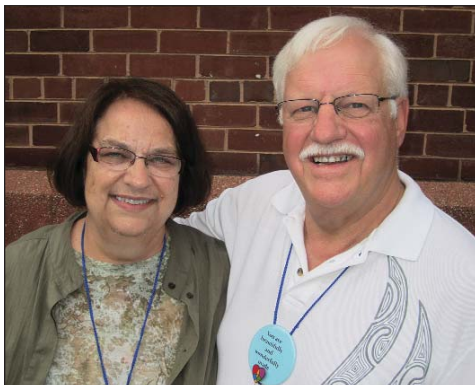
What to Call Ourselves in Other Languages

Originally submitted as a resolution to establish a task group to determine the appropriate “translation” of ReconcilingWorks in Spanish, given the difficulty we had translating our former name, Lutherans Concerned, the motion became through floor discussion a resolution directing the board of directors to establish a process by which appropriate names were found for the organization in languages other than English when needed.

Commending and Thanking Regional Coordinators

The assembly celebrated and thanked the Regional Coordinators (RCs) for their dedication, commitment and service, past, present and future. RCs are the face, voice and presence of ReconcilingWorks closer to the grassroots of this movement and organization. On a day-to-day basis they volunteer their time, talents, and passion to the work. In response to this resolution, RCs present at the assembly (René García, Region 4; Kathy Shattuck, Region 5; Scott Binde, Region 8; Paul and Karen Jolly, Region 1; Ken Miller, Region 7) rose to speak of the joys, rewards, and challenges of their work. They are always on the lookout for Co-RCs to share the work and thereby raise the level of achievement.

Karen and Paul Jolly, Lead Regional Coordinators.



Executive Director Emily Eastwood addresses the Assembly.

Also, they are looking for Synod Liaisons to help the flow of information. See *Contact Us* on www.ReconcilingWorks.org to contact your RC. The board of directors appropriated \$30,000 in the budget for 2012–2013 for the direct expenditures by the RCs and to convene the RCs for an annual meeting.

Resolutions on Matters Before the U.S. Congress

The assembly passed four resolutions regarding anti-bullying, marriage equality, employment non-discrimination, and immigration reform – issues that directly affect our lives as Lutherans, citizens, and advocates for full inclusion. In each case, the assembly called on members of the U.S. Congress to co-sponsor these bills and for the Congress to pass them. The assembly also called on the Presiding Bishop, clergy, and other leaders to publicly favor these bills and inform their constituent members of Congress of their support for: (*House of Representative Bills = HR, Senate Bills = S*)

- i) Anti-Bullying Proposals – Safe Schools Improvement (SSIA) (HR 1648/S 506) and Students Non-Discrimination Acts (SNDA) (HR 998/S 555)
The SSIA would establish a framework for states and communities to make schools safer for students. The SNDA would establish federal protections for students regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ii) The Respect for Marriage Act (HR 1116/S 598)
When passed, the Respect for Marriage Act would repeal the so-called Defense of Marriage Act.
- iii) The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (HR 1397/S 812)
ENDA would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity when passed. This is a fully inclusive act, specifically naming lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgender people.
iv) The Uniting American Families Act (UAF) (HR 1537/S 821)
Current immigration law permits a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident to sponsor his/her spouse, child, or parent but not same-gender partners in the immigration process, despite the evidence that 25 other countries do allow such sponsorship. When passed, UAF would enable loving families to remain together by extending immigration protections to same-gendered couples.

Updated Language

In the course of the floor debate on these last four resolutions, the assembly agreed that the phrase “people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions” was more inclusive, simpler language than the typical labels of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender or LGBTQ... followed by a string of descriptive letters, given that many people, particularly young people, are not comfortable with labels. You will see this language used more frequently in the future. If the case of existing laws or bills in process, we will report the language used.

State of ReconcilingWorks – Emily Eastwood

In true Emily fashion, the report on the future and the strategic directions ReconcilingWorks will follow to create the change we seek was delivered as a series of stories, illustrating dramatically the principal points of the strategy approved by the board of directors, available on our website and included in the Spring issue of *Concord*. Strategic directions are the specific, focused activities that will enable us to achieve our mission.

She began with thanks. The thanks were addressed to the boards and staff that had shown care and patience during her almost two-year bout of serious illness, now a thing of the past and hopefully not to return. She thanked Len Weiser, Karen Jolly, Paul Jolly, Rose Beeson, Jim Morrell, Jane Austin, Ross Murray, Nicole García, Chris Berry, Darryl Kiehl and JamieAnn Meyers, in this context. She thanked the board now serving for their service, the gifts of their time, talents, and passion.

Moving onto the Strategic Plan, she said it was carefully and painstakingly thought out so that it would serve us well for five or more years into the future. Representatives of the

continued on page 6

Business of the Future

continued from page 5

leadership, volunteer and paid staff, outside expertise in such planning, and consultants had prepared the bones of the strategy, following guidelines developed by boards of directors. The board of directors then worked over the course of a year to finalize the strategy into the document presented in the *Concord* and on our website.

Our new name, ReconcilingWorks, has received a flurry of welcome and approval. The vast majority of comments have been positive and uplifting about moving to a name that better expressed who we are, what we do, and how we intend to influence the church and society to achieve full inclusion.

Those comments that were negative had to do with process, some thinking that this change was a top-down decision. As Emily explained, quite the opposite was the case. The process was a long one, involving three boards of directors, three different firms with expertise in branding and name change, and focus groups of members representing the diversity of our membership, the diversity of the church, and the diversity of society at large. However, all of this activity would have seemed to happen in the background, unless you personally participated in one of the activities where it was discussed.

ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation is a name and an identity that will grow over time, Emily said. The reason for that growth is that full participation is not

just about LGBT issues, though now they are our principal focus. But, as we explore the meaning of operating at the intersection of oppressions, we will find ourselves meeting people where they are, bowed down by all the ways that those with perceived power deliberately or inadvertently harm people on the basis of characteristics used to put others on the outside looking in, or worse.

The Stories and Our Strategic Directions

What follows are the stories Emily told in illustration of ReconcilingWorks' strategic directions.

Deepening and Widening the RIC Program – Story One

RIC, Reconciling in Christ, is our core business. Everything we do is to increase the number, reach, and influence of RIC in the church and in society.

Bishop Graham of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod came unannounced to Luther Place Memorial Church one Sunday to thank the congregation for having opened their facilities to the Occupy Washington folks when the Park Service and D.C. Police moved in to clear them out of the park across from the White House. We happened to be at Luther Place independently on that Sunday and heard him tell the congregation how proud to be Lutheran they had made him feel.

Afterwards, a member of this congregation came up to the bishop and said that he, a partnered gay man, had belonged to another congregation, not RIC, but seemingly accepting of them both. They'd worshiped. He'd taught Sunday School and been president of the congregation for a time. This year his partner died. That church did and said nothing. Nothing. In his profound grief at the death of his partner and the silent treatment by his congregation, he left that congregation and later found Luther Place, a place and a people who embraced him, encouraged him to tell his stories, and helped him grieve. He thanked the bishop for coming that day, and for acknowledging publically that this place, Luther Place, this RIC congregation, was a special place.

Emily said, "Our goal is to work so that no Lutheran church in the United States, no Lutheran church in Argentina, in Uganda, in Russia, no Lutheran church anywhere, does not welcome persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and

expressions. Every Lutheran church should be an RIC congregation."

Change the Church to Change the World to Change the Church – Story Two

The Regional Coordinators (RCs) met this year in Seguin, Texas, on the campus of Texas Lutheran University, Emily's alma mater. There were three Lutheran churches in Seguin at the beginning of this story, none of them RIC. But, in one of them there were those who thought theirs might be the first RIC congregation. Instead, following the decisions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly that eliminated the prohibition to partnered gay clergy serving in the national church, there was movement within the congregation to take it out of the ELCA. Three times the congregation held First Votes to leave, all of which failed to reach the necessary 2/3 majority because of the stalwart attendance and vote of those who wished to stay.

The debates were contentious, the tensions real, the rift in the congregation visible and painful. Acrimony reached such a high point that threats were made against the livelihoods of those who were preventing the leaving by their faithfulness: those making the threats promised they would see to it that if you were a real estate agent on the side of staying, you'd made your last sale in Seguin; if a florist, your business would wither away. Threats against the pastor, who wanted to stay with the ELCA, reached a pitch that a security system was installed at his house to further ensure his safety.

Finally, those who wanted to leave the ELCA offered \$90,000 to the part of the congregation that wanted to stay, if they would just leave the church. The writing being on the wall about how it was going to go in the future, those opposed to leaving the ELCA took the deal. With the money and their faithfulness, 100-strong, they established the Lutheran Mission of Seguin, now the only RIC congregation in that city. They hold services in the Senior Center, packed every Sunday. When we worshiped with them at the end of the RCs' meeting, it was at their Outdoor Learning Center, in a pavilion erected for just such communal gatherings. Worship was at one end, followed by the best Texas barbecue on the planet at the other end: the congregants were joyful and uplifted by each other, diverse as society is, kids all over the place, "a slice of the reign of heaven" (as Emily said), members of a congregation that is growing,

ReconcilingWorks Welcomes Brit Barkholtz to Office Staff

Brit Barkholtz is thrilled to be working with ReconcilingWorks as the 2012–2013 Lutheran Volunteer Corps intern. A graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College (a private Lutheran institution), Brit recently received her BA in Honors Music with emphases in Composition and Piano Performance, and a minor in Environmental Studies. A passionate advocate for "liberty and justice for all," Brit spent a significant amount of time during her college years volunteering with organizations including the campus environmental groups, the Women's Awareness Center, and the Gustavus chapter of Queers and Allies. She also is a 5-year member of the street team volunteer corps for the national non-profit organization To Write Love On Her Arms. Brit's favorite things include playing piano, laughing with friends, making kids smile, drinking strong church-basement coffee, speaking French, cheering at her siblings' hockey games, talking about Tanzania, watching the Weather Channel, and wearing pink.



because people come to a church that welcomes. Emily said, “We are not going to be limited by having ‘North America’ in our name anymore. The world needs what the people in the Lutheran Mission of Seguin have, and we are going to bring it to them.”

Emily said that we intend to change the world to be the world it should be. “Ours is the last sanctioned oppression, and around the world it will fall, in all of the 76 countries where it is now illegal to be gay.”

Turn Policy into Practice – Story Three

We conducted a Building an Inclusive Church training at the Lutheran School of Theology Chicago (LSTC)—32 hours long, for credit. Students were seminarians of all stripes and orientations. It was during the course of the instruction that we found out that five bishops of the ELCA had come to that seminary and told the members of Thesis 96, the affinity group there for LGBT and allied seminarians, that there was no place for them in their synods. Period. No matter how bright, promising, recommended by their supervisors and faculty, or the place attained by them in their class—no calls would come to them; their names would go on no lists provided to congregations. And true to that saying, graduating seminarians are not being picked up. Emily said, “We have got to think out of the box about getting qualified, eager, young seminarians placed in congregations.”

On a more positive note regarding LSTC, a former president of that institution had once said that this seminary was not ever going to become RIC “on my watch.” This year, (note, he is a former president), the board of directors of LSTC passed a resolution making it the third Lutheran seminary to become Reconciling In Christ.

Nonetheless, Emily said, “We have much work to do to turn policy into practice.”

Working at the Intersection of Oppressions – Story Four

Emily told of sitting on an airplane headed for this assembly, taking advantage of a moment. Seated next to her was a well-dressed, young, African-American male—pressed white shirt, tie, early 20s. Asked where he was from, D.C. or Minneapolis, he answered Minneapolis. Further conversation revealed he was travelling to see his girlfriend, who had been in D.C. for six months. He said while there he was staying at the Washington Plaza Hotel (on Thomas Circle with Luther Place and the Donovan House Hotel). When asked in return why she



Bishop Richard Graham of the Metro D.C. Synod offers greetings to the assembly.

was travelling, Emily said for an assembly of people who work for full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions. To which he replied, “You mean gay folk.” Knowing he was from Minneapolis, Emily asked what he thought of the marriage amendment to the state constitution on the ballot for November. He replied that “marriage equality is right up there with voter ID.” The rest of his tale came out, beginning with “my brother is gay” and

“Working on marriage equality does not eclipse RIC... it embraces RIC.”

“we are from Liberia” and “we fled the earlier chaos there” and then “I recently watched a news story from there in which a mob beat a man to the ground because he was gay and set fire to him. When he struggled up and tried to run away, they beat him down again and again set fire to him, piling furniture up on him so he would burn to death.” It ended with “Why did no one try to help him?”

We work at the intersection of oppressions. There is much to be done there, much to get involved with, many opportunities to connect with people whose lives are an intersection of issues: marriage equality, voter ID, sexual orientation, and stories that freeze your blood.

Emily said that we didn’t go to seek out marriage equality as an issue to be addressed; marriage equality came to us, earlier than we thought, because of external events: ballot initiatives in Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington State. Marriage equality is an important issue all by itself; it also is an entrée issue to an even larger discussion. Working at the intersection of oppressions, working on marriage equality, does not eclipse RIC; rather, these issues embrace RIC, provide openings for dialog about welcoming. Emily said that we are in deep conversation with congregations not yet RIC that began

with their saying that this anti-gay marriage measure on the ballot is “just wrong.”

Organizational Excellence – Story Five

Our long-term success will be enhanced by emphasizing organizational excellence and financial stability. Organizational excellence is the fifth of our strategic directions.

We are a staff of eight and a set of volunteers, professional and passionate about this work and dedicated to accomplishing everything we have set out, in order to achieve full inclusion. We have outgrown our current home in St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. Much as it has been our home for all these years in a relationship that has benefited both, we now must seek quarters that allow the full functioning of staff, with the possibility of future growth as we achieve our financial and strategic goals.

We are blessed to have three RIC congregations seeking to have us establish our office in their facilities. As with any look to move to a new house, each of these comes

with advantages and disadvantages. One of them, Gustavus Adolphus, has offered to install central air-conditioning in the quarters we would occupy, a welcome sweetener given the ravages of weather this summer. The space they have offered is more than adequate, offers room for growth, and will present a professional appearance that aids in the arduous work that we do. The overall facility at Gustavus Adolphus is large enough that this assembly could have been held there. Gustavus Adolphus is not yet an RIC congregation, but they want us to move into their facility. Moving there will facilitate the work we do, foster organizational excellence, and allow yet another opportunity to arise for the work of full inclusion.

Emily said the world needs what we have to offer it. To achieve the change the world needs, we organize people and we organize money. We are looking for \$400,000 in major donations and have no concerns about raising it. We know the resource is out there. Based on your passionate generosity in the past, we have every confidence that we will achieve this goal, and more.

She finished by saying, “Reconciling does work. I thank you all every day for the opportunity to do this work. I have the best job in the world.” ■

Speakers

continued from page 1

so grateful for you. You have remained in the ELCA as you have worked for us to become a more fully inclusive church,” he said. “I say that, recognizing that many of you were not permitted full participation, experiencing marginalization and rejection even as you stayed actively engaged in congregations and in the life and witness of the ELCA.”

He acknowledged ReconcilingWorks’ perseverance in times of discouragement while leading the way. This leadership, he explained, shows the growth in faith, leadership, witness and the joy that many are experiencing as a result of the ELCA’s 2009 Churchwide Assembly decisions.

Hanson remarked that this leadership has also been shown in the ELCA’s anti-bullying commitment, helping the church to make sure that commitment is more than just words in a resolution, but occasion for awareness and action, repentance and healing.

After giving many examples of the ways the ELCA is carrying out God’s work of healing and restoring community in the world, from



The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber presents a Bible Study for the Reconciling Works 2012 assembly.

can hear again for the first time,” Foster said. “The story brings good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind.”

She explained that those who heard Jesus were not expecting anything to happen. Like Jesus, she said, we are people on a mission. “We are people who have a message to send,” she told assembly participants.

“Reconciliation works. And reconciliation is work. It is for marathoners who are

The cranky spiritualism of a postmodern gal.”

Bolz-Weber thanked assembly participants and, by extension, members of ReconcilingWorks for their work toward full inclusion. She said her congregation, which is 20 to 25 percent GLBT, appreciates this and explained that the ELCA becoming more inclusive has made a huge difference in the lives of some members in particular, including a young transgendered man who is in seminary.

She spoke on a passage from Second Corinthians about God’s reconciling the world and giving us a ministry of reconciliation. “What do we know about reconciliation?” was the question that introduced her discussion.

She spoke about the emergence of purity vs. justice in people, organizations and churches. “A lot of the churches got purity, and a lot of the churches got justice,” she said. Behind purity, she said, is often fear, the need for security, and safety. “You know when justice work gets really skewed? It’s when it becomes purity work.” Behind justice, on the other hand, is often anger, which is the case for her, she said.

In sharing her own “purity story” about new people coming into her congregation who did not fit the mix of the members who were already there, she described her own and her congregation’s eventual acceptance of them through a process of conversation.

The main part of her first session was the telling of part of her life’s story and her faith journey.

A difficult moment was telling her parents, who raised her in the conservative Church of Christ, that she was going to be ordained as a Lutheran pastor and start a church. “I had to sort of get over my anger, and they had to get over their purity,” she said. “There was a beautiful moment of reconciliation.”

Bolz-Weber’s second session was on the themes of loving our enemies and forgiveness. “The issue of forgiveness is one of the trickier elements in Christianity since it can feel like forgiveness is the same as saying it’s [a sinful act] okay,” she explained.

In recounting one of her recent experiences related to commemorating the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, she showed how forgiveness can be a freeing act. “Maybe forgiveness is actually the opposite of saying what someone has done is okay,” she said. “It’s saying that it’s not okay, that I’m not going to absorb [the sinful act] anymore. I simply won’t be tied to it.”

continued on page 13

“For your prophetic leadership and faithful partnership in this church, I say thanks be to God.” — Bishop Hanson

its ecumenical relationships to continuing the response to disasters in Haiti and Japan that occurred months and years ago, Hanson concluded his address by returning to ReconcilingWorks’ part of that mission.

“We do share a living, daring confidence in God’s grace! It frees us to be a Christ-centered, Spirit-filled, Gospel-proclaiming, creation-caring, community-restoring, neighbor-serving, peacemaking, justice-seeking church,” Hanson said. “For your prophetic leadership and faithful partnership in this church, I say thanks be to God.”

The full text of Bishop Hanson’s speech can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/BpHansonReconcilingWorks>.

Sermon at Opening Worship

Immediately after Hanson’s keynote address, The Rev. Dr. Katrina Foster, chaplain to the ReconcilingWorks Board of Directors, delivered a sermon in the assembly’s opening worship that continued to set the tone for the assembly.

Foster preached on what Jesus did following his baptism and the 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness. She said that, after surviving temptation, Jesus began to teach, filled with the Holy Spirit. “He takes old stories and tells them in a way that people

insistent and persistent,” she said.

She called doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God “verbs of ministry.” In doing these things, “we do reconciling works. And it makes the most practical difference.”

She added, “This work of reconciliation has been entrusted to us. Reconciling works, but it is work.”

Bible Studies

The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, an ELCA mission church in Denver, Colorado, and a leading voice in the emerging church movement, was the assembly’s Bible study leader and spoke in two hour-long sessions.

Dressed casually in a tank top that revealed heavily tattooed arms, Bolz-Weber began her first session by acknowledging that she is an unconventional pastor and was going to say things that may challenge the audience. “I swear like a truck driver. I ask that you accept this about me,” she said. “It’s excruciating for me to try to not be myself.” She has somewhat of a cult following in the ELCA and beyond, mostly through social media, in which people read and share her sermons from her blog, “Sarcastic Lutheran:



Display on sidewalk outside Luther Place Memorial Church ("God's doors are open to all.")



Pacific Violence Prevention Institute presents an anti-bullying training pre-event.



Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane of the Delaware-Maryland Synod offers greetings to the assembly.



ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson with Executive Director Emily Eastwood and Co-Chairs Nicole Garcia and the Rev. Christopher Berry



Worshippers sing during opening service.



Rev. Dr. Katrina Foster preaching at opening worship.



Assembly goes at Reconciling Works 2012.



Bishop Richard Graham presiding at opening worship.



The Rev. Shawn Brandon and Mo Goff peruse items for sale at the silent auction.



At the banquet.



Anita Hill, Jan Bailey, Richard Andersen, Randy Beard perform the play Families Valued.



Sunday worship at Luther Place Memorial Church.



Rev. Jim Boline preaching.



Lanae Erickson Hatalsky, Third Way, and Mo Goff, Leader for the Lutheran Day on the Hill, speak to the assembly about lobbying on LGBT issues.



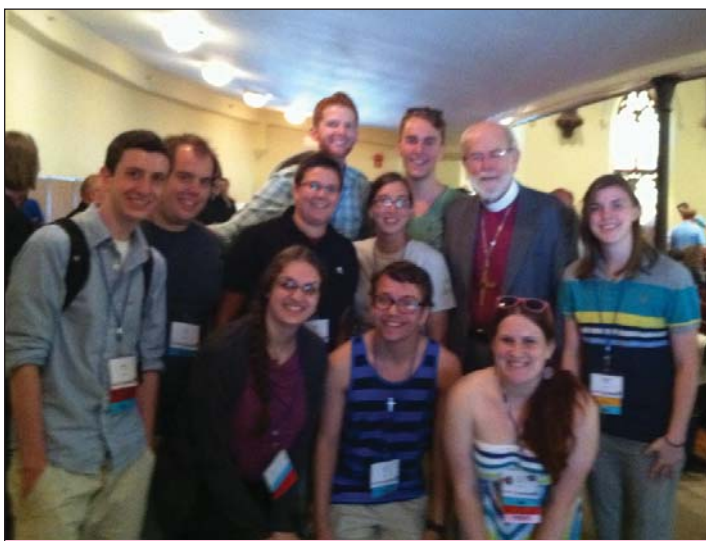
Sarah Leonard and Emily Hamilton exhibit funky dancing and apparel at the assembly banquet.



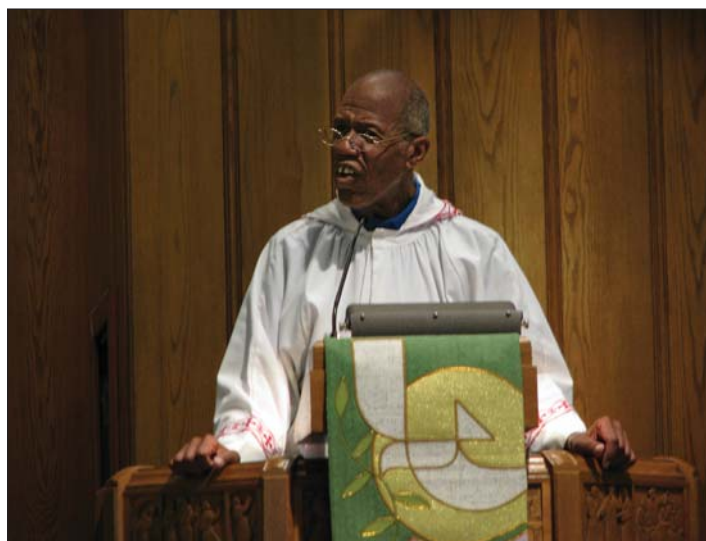
Mural outside Luther Place Memorial Church



The Rev. Katrina Foster greets Michael Cobbler, preacher for the closing worship.



Youth and Young Adult Convocation participants meet with Bishop Hanson.



Michael Cobbler preaching during closing worship.



The Minnesota delegation and friends meet with U.S. Senator Al Franken during Lutheran Day on the Hill.

RECONCILING WORKS 2012 ASSEMBLY

Day on the Hill

Lutherans visit their elected legislators in Washington.

Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., is the home of the highest legislative body in the United States, Congress, the place where the representative, law-making branch of the U.S. government resides, in close proximity to the pinnacle of the other co-equal branches, the Executive Branch and the Judiciary Branch. It's to that branch that ReconcilingWorks took its messages of full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

On July 10, 2012, eighty-five participants in *Reconciling Works 2012* went to Capitol Hill to visit the offices of their elected members of Congress, Representatives and Senators. They carried their stories, their passion and commitment, and messages asking for the assistance that only members of Congress can give on five legislative bills before those two houses, on anti-bullying, marriage equality, employment non-discrimination and immigration reform as it relates to LGBT people.

The five legislative bills were the subject of resolutions passed by the ReconcilingWorks assembly the previous day, calling on members of Congress to co-sponsor the bills (that is, not just vote for it, but to put their names on it), calling on the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, bishops, clergy and church leaders to publically speak in favor of the bills and to inform their elected representatives in Congress of their support.

That is exactly what the participants in Day on the Hill did. They made 95 individual and group visits to the offices of members of Congress from 25 states, voting constituents visiting elected officials and their staffs. In addition to the list of constituent visits, visits

were also scheduled with members of Congress who are ELCA Lutherans.

Day on the Hill was organized by ReconcilingWorks member, Mo Goff, Vice-President, Federal Relations, American Council of Life Insurers; Lanae Erickson Hatalsky, Director of Social Policy & Politics

Program of the Third Way, a think tank in Washington that engages in "fresh thinking," as they say; and, by ReconcilingWorks member Travis Van Horn, college student, political science major and ReconcilingWorks intern.

Mo said, "We had several goals in mind: to show people how easy and powerful it was to engage their legislators, how powerful it is for legislators to see that people of faith have strongly held positive beliefs about LGBT issues, and show the incredibly powerful witness all those clerical collars accompanied by all those smiling Lutherans. We set out to change the face of faith on our issues."

To visit your elected representatives, it is a simple matter of calling their offices and making an appointment. Really. It is just that

simple. They love to hear from constituents, favorable or not. But, putting together the visits of nearly 100 people to their Representative and two Senators requires organization, logistics, constant attention, and schedule de-confliction.

Enter Travis Van Horn. Travis sent out letters to the members of Congress stating who we were, when we wanted to come visit (a three-hour block of time on July 10th for all visits), and that we were coming to speak in favor of LGBT issues. Then, the back and forth working of schedules began that continued right up to the day prior to the visits.

"Many of the offices I spoke with said that this was the first time they had been visited by a faith-based group coming to speak in favor of LGBT issues," Travis said. "I became much more familiar with how LGBT issues play out in legislation, the role that people of faith play in social issues and movements, and how to advocate public policy through the lens of a non-profit, non-governmental organization."

In most cases, the visits were with members of the staff of the office. "That's ok," Mo Goff said. "Staff will report accurately to the member of Congress what was spoken about during the meeting." Five of the visits were, in fact, meetings with the member of Congress.

A "Telling the Story" training was conducted for all the participants and everyone received a plenary session team-taught briefing from Mo and Lanae Erickson Hatalsky, Director of Social Policy & Politics

We set out to change the face of faith on our issues.

Program of the Third Way, a think tank in Washington. The briefing updated everyone on what the research says about reaction to LGBT issues, ran through a summary on the legislative bills, and, in essence, told the participants they were the absolute expert on their story, that they could expect to be listened to with respect and they were going to have fun participating.

Most of the feedback from the participants was that it was easy once you got into the visit. Nervousness faded as they told their story and asked that the member support all these bills or one in particular.

Diane Brobeck, Lancaster, Ohio, said, "Yes, at first it can feel a bit out of your comfort zone, not knowing what to expect, but once you do it, you see the value and the

importance of them hearing that being in favor of LGBT issues is based on our faith – that we are religious people.”

Alex Horsey, 16, Portland, Oregon, Executive Director, Project Believe In Me, said, “I had written emails and sent letters before but had never done face-to-face, so going into it I was ready with what I wanted to say, but apprehensive. I was unsure what to expect. And, I didn’t actually think they would pay attention. But they did! They were interested, listened, and took notes. I’d do this again in a heartbeat!”

The Rev. Matthew Bode, pastor, Spirit of Hope, Detroit, Michigan, said “These visits are effective – a chance to influence staff and members of Congress. Any time progressive people of faith speak out to their legislators it makes a statement – that there are many ways to be Christian other than conservative. And the impact of that is even greater at the state level. Every progressive congregation ought to know their elected representatives. The more conversation, the more effective we are.”

Feedback from others was that they also thought the visits had real value, that they were listened to attentively and treated with



Paul Gibson, Steve Kunst, Carol Dunn, John Hayner, Cheryl Stuart, and Pr. Suzanne Blume bring concerns to their elected representatives during Lutherans Day on the Hill.

respect, even if the visit was not a constituent-visit but because the member of Congress is an ELCA Lutheran.

Unfortunately, that was not universally the case. One visit was with the Chief of Staff of a Senator from a Midwestern state. When Charlette Beckler, 19, Youth Representative on the ReconcilingWorks Board of Directors, spoke of the bullying she had received when it became known that she was a lesbian, this Chief of Staff suggested that she was responsible for what she got because she had “advertised” her sexual orientation. It does not come as a surprise that there is a deep well of ignorance on LGBT issues in society and among some of its leaders, but it is an

entirely different order of thing to blame the victims for the oppression they receive. Obviously, there is much work still to be done in some quarters, with those who still think it is ok to come down on the side the oppressors.

On the whole, the overall results were very good. Powerful legislative offices saw and heard that people of faith held strong beliefs in favor of LGBT people. Our messages of full inclusion were communicated. People learned it was easy and powerful to speak to their elected officials.

Representative Ron Kind, 3rd District, Wisconsin, signed on as a co-sponsor of the Student Non-Discrimination Act as a direct result of this visit to him. In the days, weeks and months ahead other, similar results are expected.

Mo Goff says, “What’s important is that legislators hear and see people of faith who come down on the inclusion side of LGBT issues, countervailing what they usually hear. And, you don’t have to come to Washington to do this. You can visit the district offices of your congressional representatives, tell them that it is your faith that compels you to speak out, and ask for their support. You will have an impact.” ■

Speakers

continued from page 8

Sermon at Healing Service

The second day of the assembly concluded with a quiet service of healing. The Rev. James Boline, pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Santa Monica, California, and a chaplain for the assembly, preached. He struck notes of healing, grace and reconciliation.

Boline preached on the story from Matthew 9 of Jesus healing a paralyzed person but being accused of blasphemy by some scribes. He said this shows that reconciliation works, sometimes it doesn’t work, and sometimes it takes a toll. “When we permit our neighbors to come as they are, reconciling works,” he said. “But, oh, how the heart resists that work.”

He said that Jesus speaks to those who have “paralyzed” hearts – ones that are grieving,

disappointed, replete, expectant, or mourning our dead – noting that some are in “vocational paralysis” because the ELCA has not put its policy into practice regarding GLBT rostered leaders.

Boline reminded assembly participants that their paths were crossed by the same Christ who healed the paralyzed person.

Worshippers sing a final hymn outside Reformation Lutheran Church at closing worship.



PHOTO BY JOHN HAYNER

Sermon at Closing Worship

Michael Cobbler, the founder and principal of Beloved Community Consulting and a member of the Board of Directors, helped conclude the assembly with a sermon that touched on hate and reconciliation. His sermon alternated between speaking and songs that got the audience singing and clapping. He accompanied the singing of one song with a trombone.

“Reconciliation always works. And because it always works, and because we are children of God, we can celebrate the reality of being blessed without being stressed,” he said.

“In short, I simply want to say to you that, in all that we do... treat the haters as if they were tax collectors and Gentiles. [As Jesus did], love them, show compassion because the higher authority that we are driven by is, in fact, the authority of Christ.” ■

Siefkes, Lifetime Achievement Awardees Honored

ReconcilingWorks expresses thanks for years of faithful service.

At the *Reconciling Works 2012* assembly, delegates and friends at the celebratory dinner banquet on Saturday were keyed up, perhaps thinking of the silent auction which had preceded it and the live auction to come, or perhaps anticipating the readers' theatre presentation and funky dance to follow. But they could easily have been concentrating on the awards to be made at the dinner itself. Both the Jim Siefkes Justice-Maker Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award recognize those who have made significant contributions to the quest for justice, which is the core of ReconcilingWorks.

The Siefkes Award was established in 1992 to commend the "superior and tireless effort of straight allies on behalf of LGBT Lutherans," and was named for the Rev. Jim Siefkes, writer of the first Affirmation of Welcome and the one who called the meeting in 1974 which led to the formation of Lutherans Concerned for Gay People.

The criteria for the Siefkes Award reflect contributions that have been significant and far reaching.

By that standard, as the Rev. Darryl Kiehl stated in his introduction, this year's winners are a clear and decisive choice. The Rev. Bob and Jeannie Graetz have over 50 years of

arrest for participation in civil actions; and have written blogs and books promoting justice, such as *A White Preacher's Message on Race and Reconciliation: Based on His Experiences Beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott*.

Rev. Kiehl went on to report that, after retirement, people may stay quietly at home in Midwestern comfort—or, like the Graetzes, they may continue to serve and cause us to feel pride and joy. Back at the time of the bus boycott, when Bob was serving as pastor of all-black Trinity Lutheran Church in Montgomery, he and Jeannie suffered slashed tires, sugar in the gas tank, death threats, bombs, and general malice. But the boycott had a broader purpose than bus ridership. As Bob reported in published interviews, the boycott "encouraged people to get involved in other ways in dealing with other aspects of segregation and discrimination." He called the boycott "a spiritual movement based on love and nonviolence that changed the hearts of people across the country." What a perfect description for the mission of ReconcilingWorks.

Both Bob and Jeannie spoke to the *Reconciling Works 2012* assembly, explaining their pride in their very diverse family, which is multi-ethnic,

multi-national, multi-abled, and has political variants and multi-religious affiliations. They said they feel it embodies the "beloved

family." Actions they have taken in many cases were designed to honor their gay son's loving, talented nature, including their preparation of a panel for the AIDS Quilt



The Rev. Chuck Lewis, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, with Emily Eastwood and Jeannine Janson.

ReconcilingWorks is not about tearing down walls; they only get rebuilt. We are building bridges.

Project. When they deal with oppression in its many forms, they said, they often think, "This is for you, Ray."

The second award of the evening honored a member of the LGBT community who has given a lifetime of service. The Rev. Chuck Lewis has been part of Lutheran LGBT actions for nearly 50 years and is still active. In 1963, he was assigned by the Lutheran Board of American Missions to develop a mission congregation in the North Beach area of San Francisco. Chuck's supervisor suggested that he explore this ministry area because the church had "no relationships with homosexuals." Serving as a clergy representative on the constituting board of what was then called the San Francisco Council on Religion and the Homosexual, Chuck continued to seek ways to challenge laws and practices that shut gay men and women out of church and society. One influential activity was to organize a Mardi Gras Ball—which was immediately raided by the police. Chuck and the Council clergy called a press conference the next morning to protest the blatant discrimination. The reaction of the media was a catalyst for the gay and lesbian rights movement in the entire city.

ReconcilingWorks Vice-Chair Jeannine Janson presented the award. She explained that Pastor Lewis went on to study the

continued on page 15



The Rev. Bob and Jeannie Graetz, recipients of the Siefkes Award, with Emily Eastwood and the Rev. Darryl Kiehl.

When they deal with oppression in its many forms, they often think, "This is for you, Ray."

work in their records.

They participated in the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama; served as teachers; have advocated for LGBT rights, including an

ELCA Synod Assemblies 2012

Synods make great strides toward marriage equality.

It continually amazes us how far the ELCA has moved in the last several years toward a fuller inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. In the 2010 assembly season, just two years ago, twenty-eight synods debated whether to rescind the ministry policy changes, and sixteen debated the 2009 social statement on sexuality. A handful of those resolutions passed. In 2011, nine synods debated those topics, and all were defeated. This year, there was just one: Eastern Washington-Idaho, which defeated a resolution to rescind the ministry policy changes by 79 percent.

However, 2012 was by no means a quiet legislative season for ReconcilingWorks. Much of our legislative work in the 2012 assembly season in the ELCA was focused on marriage equality. We worked with Lutherans at twelve synod assemblies to help them organize to pass legislation in support of marriage for all.

In Minnesota, all of the six synods have passed resolutions in favor of equality under the law, most by overwhelming majorities, with five synods making direct statements against the proposed state constitutional amendment that would ban marriage for same-gender couples.

Two of the three synods in Washington State adopted resolutions supporting the marriage equality law as passed in the state,

Metro D.C.) passed resolutions in support of the passage of the Uniting American Families Act, which would allow U.S. citizens and documented permanent residents to sponsor their same-gender partners for permanent resident status. Sixteen ELCA synod bishops have also signed on to calls for justice by supporting the Uniting American Families Act.

These actions generated a great deal of positive attention for our cause. ELCA pastors and laypeople were interviewed in both print and television, demonstrating to the public at large that many people of faith support marriage equality. In Minneapolis, one of the local TV news stations led with this: "Lutheran leadership decides to go against the Catholic church on a hot-button

diversity of the Metro Chicago synod as well as the very diversity that ReconcilingWorks is striving to realize in its commitment to work at the intersection of oppressions—speaking to the pain and offense of all these histories of discrimination and oppressions, calling the church to fairness and freedom, and witnessing to our common Gospel mission.

Our work in the synods puts faces on the issues and highlights stories of faith and family to enhance our broader public life together in our communities. Regardless of the specific topics it might engage, our presence at assemblies builds relationships with people from many parts of the church, bolstering our RIC and Reconciling Lutherans programs.

Perhaps most importantly, our synodical work, especially where we have had less visibility historically, gives heart and hope to those who are still waiting for a more positive word from the church. ■

Awardees Honored

continued from page 14

services available to city residents during late night hours, and concluded that more was needed. To help fill the gap, the San Francisco Night Ministry was founded in 1964, to which Chuck became a part-time and then full-time Night Minister. He continues after his retirement to serve as a volunteer.

In 1975, Pastor Lewis was instrumental in founding what is now known as the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of ReconcilingWorks. It was the first chapter composed of both gay and straight people, and included in its goals education of segments of the church and creating spiritual support and affirmation for gays and lesbians. He is the one who still today makes sure there are Lutherans carrying RIC banners in the city Pride Parade, and that there is a hospitality suite at the synod assemblies.

As she presented the award, Janson announced that what had previously been called the "Lifetime Achievement Award" will now be known as the Chuck Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award, to be awarded from time to time to LGBTQ people who have worked to make the world a better place in church and society.

In his impassioned response, Chuck reminded all that "ReconcilingWorks is not about tearing down walls; they only get rebuilt. We are building bridges." ■

Our work in the synods puts faces on the issues and highlights stories of faith and family to enhance our broader public life together.

with the third (Eastern Washington-Idaho) encouraging the synod to conduct forums on the subject.

The Metro Chicago Synod overwhelmingly supported, by over 90 percent, passing the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act in the state of Illinois. The synod took the extra step of holding a hearing prior to the floor debate to facilitate discussion of the resolution. The hearing was attended by close to one-third of the voting membership.

The Metro D.C. Synod passed a resolution by 70 percent supporting the marriage equality law in Maryland, with the Delaware-Maryland synod calling for public forums prior to the Maryland referendum on the law that will come in November.

The Allegheny Synod defeated a resolution that would have defined marriage as exclusively between a man and woman by 56 percent.

Two synods (Delaware-Maryland and

political issue." That's not a precisely true statement, since no mention was made at the Minneapolis Area Synod assembly about the Catholic church. Yet it illustrates, and refutes, a common misperception among many in our society that "the Church" holds a single and negative position regarding marriage for same-gender couples.

The legislative action around marriage in these synods is part of what ReconcilingWorks is doing to realize our mission of seeking full participation for all people in the life of the church and in society. Our work provides support and opportunities for leaders to step forward to speak the truth about our lives and our families. In Minnesota, three synod bishops wrote public letters supportive of defeating the constitutional amendment in that state. In Washington State and Maryland, bishops spoke to state legislatures in support of marriage equality. In the Metro Chicago synod, speakers came forward representing the racial, economic, and age

TransLutherans Proclaimed as New Affinity Group in ReconcilingWorks

BY JAMIEANN MEYERS **Transgender Representative to the Board of Directors**

TransLutherans was proclaimed as a new affinity group within ReconcilingWorks at our assembly in Washington, D.C., on July 8, 2012. Thanks go to the board for approving the formation of this group at its 2012 spring meeting in Minneapolis. TransLutherans has been a long time in the making. A word or two about the history of this process is in order.

The 2000 assembly of LC/NA approved a resolution adding transgender inclusion to programming and materials. In July 2002, the assembly added bi and trans to the requirements for qualifying congregational affirmations of welcome for the RIC program. In January 2003, the board convened a task force to consider language, resources, surveys, correspondence and trainings needed to ensure bi and trans inclusion in LC/NA as well as the RIC program. All congregations previously approved for RIC were asked to update their welcoming statements by explicitly naming lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, or by including a more expansive phrase “people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.” New RIC applications received after a three-year grace period were required to include the updated language. In 2010, during the final business session of that year’s assembly, delegates approved a resolution to the do the following:

- to increase transgender and bisexual training opportunities for board, staff, and Regional Coordinators,
- to create a national speakers’ bureau qualified to provide education,
- to commit the Legislative Team and trans/bi/queer communities to work together to create resolutions for synod and churchwide assemblies. These resolutions would expand the welcome of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to specifically include trans*, bi and all people affected by binary gender oppression.

TransLutherans will support a network of people who will help to carry out this important work.

Several years ago, two related personal experiences deeply affected the course of my advocacy and the carrying out of these sacred tasks through ReconcilingWorks as transgender representative and board

member.

Twenty-five years ago I distanced myself from the Church. My faith life was mired in a valley of despair and was slipping away as my gender identity, first sensed at age three, welled up within me and began to fill my consciousness. I was overwhelmed with fear of losing everything I held dear, including my

All transgender and gender non-conforming people and our allies are invited to join our new affinity group.

very life, were I to come out as a trans* person. When I finally did come out to myself, then to my wife and some close friends, a feeling of relief began to creep back into my life, and my faith life was slowly restored. Many months later I sought to reestablish my ELCA church home and arranged a meeting with my pastor.

After reintroducing myself and explaining to them that I was in the midst of my gender transition, I shared how I very much wanted, I needed, to feel welcome once again in my congregation, from which I had distanced myself after many years of faithful service. They looked at me for a few moments with furrowed brow, and finally said “JamieAnn, I think you might be welcome in one, maybe two churches in town. Certainly the Congregational church would welcome you, and there may be one other.” It was at this moment that I began to understand that people like me might not be considered children of God and a part of the marvelous Divine creation of humanity. I subsequently sought out a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation in a nearby town and the first worship service I attended as my true self transformed my life. I began a life of advocacy for all LGBTQI people, working at the intersection of oppressions in faith and secular communities.

The primary goals of TransLutherans are

several-fold:

- to lift up and provide support for transgender and gender non-conforming people;
- to call out to the people of God to welcome us as part of God’s sacred creation;
- to educate others about transgender and gender non-conforming people and the issues we face;
- to advocate for welcome and full inclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the life of the Church.

All transgender and gender non-conforming people and our allies are invited to join our new affinity group. If you are a Lutheran transgender or gender non-conforming person or an ally, no matter where you are in your journey of faith, please contact me at trans@reconcilingworks.org and join TransLutherans. There is strength in numbers as all of us, people of an infinite variety of sexual orientations and gender identities, walk together with one another and with God.

Please pray for this newborn affinity group and for our work among us. God continues to call all of us by name — there is a place at the table for all of us, no exceptions. ■

See our website at www.ReconcilingWorks.org soon for a new section dedicated to TransLutherans.

[Editor’s note: Trans* (with the asterisk) is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender-identity and gender-expression spectrum, including gender non-conforming, transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, and trans man and trans woman.]

ReconcilingWorks Welcomes Ben Masters to Office Staff

As Executive Assistant, Ben Masters supports the work of the Executive Director and other staff in a variety of areas, including calendar management, expense reporting, and development. Ben has lived in the Twin Cities since he arrived for a

year with Lutheran Volunteer Corps in 2009. In the work of widening the church’s welcome, he continues to be encouraged by the words from the Salvadoran hymn, “Vamos Todos al Banquete” (#523 in the *ELW* for you folks singing along at home): “May we build such a place among us / Where all people are equal in love! / God has called us to work together / And to share everything we have!”





Rev. Gard (second from right) participated in a workshop on "Addressing Reconciliation and the Intersection of Oppressions on a Global Basis" at Reconciling Works 2012 with Canon Albert Ogle, Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, and Dr. Philip Moeller.

When Faith, Hope and Love are All You've Got

Courage grows in the face of harassment and oppression.

BY THE REV. GARD REALF SANDAKER-NIELSEN

I don't cry often. But today the corner of my eye is filled with tears. I cry, because it is so unfair and wrong, and not as it should be. But this is the reality. It is the last day of the conference for Christian lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered (LGBT) people in St. Petersburg, the fourth in a series of East European fora, previously held in Moscow, Kiev and St. Petersburg. I just led a worship service with five other priests from Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland and Canada. Here, all church traditions are standing side by side; we are equal. The liturgy around the Eucharistic meal was a mixture of English and Protestant, Russian and Orthodox. There is chaos and it is liberating. Together we form a real community.

For many participants, it is the first time they can be open about being Christian and gay. I am surrounded by people who really risk a lot to be who they are by allowing

have fought and risked harassment and danger, we have come so far. Thanks to people who have told the stories of who they are. Those who will do the job in Eastern

Such bomb threats are something these people have to deal with all the time.

themselves to love, and to avoid having to choose between faith and love.

It is not the first time I've met LGBT people in Eastern Europe. Since 2007 I've been in Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and Latvia several times. Many things separate us, but I'm home. I am with my people, and they are not doing well. The fact that I am an ordained minister and married to a man is, in this context, almost absurd.

But it has not always been like this. In fact, during the last 20 years we have claimed our rights, and got them. Thanks to people who

Europe and Central Asia are the ones I'm with now. And they are so few, and Russia so great. How can this become a reality? I think for myself. But I do not say anything.

Yesterday, the conference hotel was evacuated because of a bomb threat. An extremist group had called the police and said that they had placed a bomb in the hotel because of us. A strange experience, as only a few weeks earlier, my office in the government building in Oslo was destroyed because of a bomb. Such bomb threats are something these people have to deal with all

the time. Consequently, many avoid cooperation with them because they're labeled a high-risk group. But I believe they will never silence us. Silence us to not be ourselves and fight for what we believe.

I have gone a long way since I started studying theology in 2008 with a fairly conservative approach. I believed that homosexuality was a sin, and there was a clear distinction between Christian and Non-Christians: those on the inside and outside of the Church. Today everything is different. From thinking that those who are persecuted for their faith were uncommon, I today have no problems thinking that those who are persecuted for their love are in the same situation. Love, faith and identity are linked tightly together and cannot be separated.

I'm glad I have come to this realization. But how can we get everyone else to see this? How can we get the world's leaders, priests and bishops, parents and siblings to understand? How do we get LGBTs themselves to see this?

The people I'm together with here in St. Petersburg believe in God and have lots of love to give. In recent years I have also seen hope emerge. They are about to rise up. They have faith in and hope that they too will one day have their rights and be able to be themselves. This gives them courage. The belief that they should not have to fear harassment by police and authorities provides them with a fighting spirit. They will contend that no one should have to hide who they are.

As I said, it is not often I cry. But along with these wonderful people I have shed some tears. I am part of something great and am grateful for it. At the same time, I have another home to go to—the home and the life they can only long for. I can leave the worries and oppression, but these people must stay behind. However, we are a people without borders, a people who are willing to fight for and with each other. ■

Rev. Gard Realf Sandaker-Nielsen is senior communications adviser in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research; board member of the LGBT Network in the Norwegian Labor Party; former president of The Norwegian Organization for LGBT Christians, Åpen Kirkegruppe; and board member of the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups. Rev. Sandaker-Nielsen attended the Reconciling Works 2012 assembly as a special international guest.

ReconcilingWorks at the ELCA National Youth Gathering

Youth tell stories of pain, hope, and peacemaking.

BY EMILY HAMILTON

In July, six staff, board members, and volunteers of ReconcilingWorks attended “Citizens With the Saints,” the triennial ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Youth Gathering is an opportunity for tens of thousands of Lutheran youth and youth pastors to worship en masse, to hear extraordinary preachers and speakers, to do service projects together, and to learn about organizations that partner with the ELCA in a variety of ministries.

This is the second youth gathering to which ReconcilingWorks has been invited. Working with trainers from the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute (pvpi.org), we provided six anti-bullying workshops attended by around 300 youth.. For four full days Charlette Beckler, Tim Feiertag, Sarah Leonard, Kurt Neumann, Tim Feiertag and I worked the floor of the convention center. It was crowded, with over 10,000 young people coming through the interactive center every day. We invited everyone who came to our space to attend our workshops, to write their name on a ribbon as their symbolic commitment to ending bullying in all of its forms and to tie it to a drab camouflage net, reclaiming it with bright colors and messages of hope.

Every day thousands of those young people and youth leaders would immediately sign their names, and they would tell their stories. Individuals would stop to talk with us about their experiences and about the people they love fiercely and wish to support. Many people took the time to write down the

reasons they are allies against bullying, and we have gathered some of those to share.

Some were the stories of communities. Parents talked about their children, teachers of their students, and young people of their friends and acquaintances who are bullied because of their size, their hair color, or the way they spoke:

“My son was bullied in school — It hurts the whole family.”

“I was bullied because people focused on the DIS of disabled.”

“I am an ally against bullying because one of my close friends is a lesbian, and she is a totally AMAZING person. Every day at school she would constantly be taunted about her sexuality. Her parents kicked her out, and I saw how much no one understood or cared for her, and she didn’t want to live anymore. I think it is completely HORRIBLE to make a person feel that way. God told us to love our neighbor as ourselves. It doesn’t matter if they’re gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or anything else. They’re still a child of God. They shouldn’t be treated any differently.”

That message of God’s love shone out through many stories:

The message of God’s love shone out through many stories.

“I am an ally because we are *all* children of God. ‘Beloved, let us love one another.’”

Some stories were of personal experiences being bullied, the damage it caused, and the joy of finding allies...

“I’ve been bullied my whole life and I know



The ReconcilingWorks crew at the ELCA Youth Gathering: Sarah Leonard, Travis Van Horn, Emily Hamilton, Charlette Beckler, and Tim Feiertag (not pictured: Kurt Neumann).

firsthand the emotional and psychological toll it takes. Thank God for my amazing friends who stood by my side through it all. I want to be like them, and save someone else’s life.”

... or of the losses too many have endured:

“RIP, Grace. We miss you! Love you!”

A few of the brightest moments came with stories of transformation. Several individuals took the time to tell us that they used to bully others and now stand as advocates against bullying behavior.

“I was a bully and a bystander. Reflecting on my actions makes me sick. I take full responsibility for the pain I caused.”

“I’ve seen people that have been affected by bullying and it breaks my heart because I know that I have been rude & disrespectful to others and I just want to say I’m sorry because no one deserves to be treated like that. Ever.”

The young people we met—those running Gay-Straight Alliances and those whose schools don’t have them, those attending RIC congregations and those whose churches are still learning and growing—all want and deserve to live in a world where they will be celebrated for being wonderfully made. Please

consider starting anti-bullying education with your congregation so that whoever wrote us this unsigned note gets their wish:

“I don’t know who I am yet, but I want to be safe when I do.” ■

Emily Hamilton recently finished a two-year Lutheran Volunteer Corps internship working in the ReconcilingWorks office supporting the Reconciling in Christ and youth and young-adult programs. She has entered the ELCA candidacy process for ordained ministry and will be attending Union Seminary in New York City this fall.

Youth attending the 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering wrote their names on colorful ribbons and added them to a camouflage net to form a “blanket” of peace.



Receiving Hospitality

The Effect of a Pride Parade March on a Straight Christian

BY GRETCHEN BRAUER-RIEKE

It was last June when my understanding changed. My work to that point had been to encourage congregations to move through a process of discernment that would hopefully lead to a decision to proactively welcome LGBT people into fellowship. As part of the straight majority, I have felt a calling to encourage other straight Christians to open their hearts to the diversity of God's creation and create hospitality for all, especially those who are not of our majority sexual orientation (heterosexual) and gender identity (male or female, as biology dictates). Then, one Sunday in June, I suddenly saw everything in a different light: I marched in a Pride Parade.

I had been interested in marching in the annual Pride Parade for a few years, but ended up with conflicts that prevented me from doing so. And, to be honest, those conflicts were a bit of a relief because there was a part of me that fretted about the perceived outrageousness of the folks in the parade — I would wonder, "Don't they understand that they're just putting everyone off with their flamboyant displays of overt sexuality?" Did I really want to become part of that?

But on Father's Day, 2011, I had no conflicts and so joined a somewhat rag-tag group of other Lutherans in downtown Portland, Oregon, to line up for the parade, bearing multi-colored streamers and signs proclaiming our welcome. Almost immediately, my fears were confirmed as our group lined up behind a parade entry that included a number of young men in full drag-queen regalia. One beautiful young man, in particular, caught my eye as he was wearing micro-shorts, some kind of bikini top, and sparkly incredibly tall platform shoes — I couldn't imagine how he could possibly walk an entire parade route in those shoes! (He made it just fine.) All around us were people who seemed to revel in gender-bending clothing and (what many of us would consider) highly sexualized displays of their bodies... I fretted about what the others in our Lutheran group were thinking and wondered again if we should we be associated with this parade.

As we waited together in the line-up for the parade to begin, though, I was gradually able to stop obsessing over what the other participants were (or weren't) wearing and started looking at their faces — and realized that I was looking at joy. I was seeing faces of people who were, for this one day, able to be in the majority at their own party, free to be exactly who they wanted to be, supported by their peers instead of suppressed by the majority — and they were so incredibly

happy! Their smiles were huge — their faces (and bodies) were completely animated. I became captivated by the inner spirit of the people around me and slowly began to be able to see flamboyance of their outer presentation as part of the complete picture: whole human beings celebrating their uniqueness.

As conservatively-dressed church-folk, we were a small minority in this massive parade — I began to feel like a black and

Everything became flipped: the ones with privilege—so careful, so stingy with our hospitality—**were extravagantly welcomed** and even thanked.

white portion of a movie that was otherwise in vivid color. How had we become so dull?

Insights kept coming as the parade started and we began to move, in step with the groups before and behind us, along a route filled with thousands of all kinds of celebrants in all kinds of dress, many colorfully marking themselves as people of sexual minorities. Like other Christian groups, we marched along with signs that proclaimed the welcome of our congregations — but what was really happening is that we were experiencing the lavish love and acceptance of people who had every reason to throw us out of the party (given the number of them who have been thrown out of our congregations). As we walked through the route, I was blown away at the graciousness and complete acceptance by the very people that we, in our congregations, spend so much time debating: should we or shouldn't we extend welcome to these "different" people?

We were the underserving recipients of *extravagant hospitality* from LGBT people, the very people who are often excluded from our congregations (or "allowed" to attend only if they don't offend us with their differentness). Without a single meeting,

without a single panel discussion, without a single vote, the people who threw this party on this day invited us to march with them, to celebrate with them, to experience the joy of acceptance with them — no questions asked, no recriminations for the harm that we, the church, have caused them.

And so everything became flipped: the ones with privilege — so careful, so stingy with our hospitality — were extravagantly welcomed and even *thanked* by those whose morality we churchgoers continue to debate and often condemn. Who, I wonder, is really following the example of Christ? Who, I wonder, is really living in the fullness of joy of who they were created to be?

I still do my work with congregations — it is important to push past the tradition of excluding those who are minorities of all kinds — but I do it with a newfound humility and almost with some embarrassment that it is still necessary work in our churches. Encouraging full inclusion of LGBT people in our churches is, no doubt, a good thing, but it does presume: 1) that LGBT people need to

come and seek *us* out in *our* buildings to experience our welcome, and 2) that it is we, the privileged majority, who have the power to extend to *them*, the "different" minority, our gift of welcome. Yet we still spend months and months debating...should we or shouldn't we?

What I wish for is that, instead of debate and discussion, all of us who feel so smug in our notion that we are the ones who have the power to issue or deny hospitality go for a march on a Sunday in June. Join *their* party, surround yourselves with people who are "the different" — become the minority for a change. And while you're there, recognize the joy of being fully oneself — feel the undeserved welcome from those we so often marginalize — think about what it means to be the sharers of God's love — wonder who is doing the sharing...

And while you're there, don't be afraid to be colorful! ■

Regional News

Report from Region 4

The synods and congregations of Region 4 (Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana) continue to exhibit a range along a spectrum of progress on welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Here are a few notes from the region:

The Gateway St. Louis Chapter is passionate about growing the RIC movement in their locale. I was there in April to present an RIC certificate and to attend a meeting regarding the Gay American Youth (GAY), a local group dedicated to LGBT youth.

All of the synods in Region 4 took a break from

“our” issues during this synod assembly season. For some, a time of healing and recuperation was needed in synods that had experienced some disturbing and even hateful debate during previous assemblies.

The South Texas chapter continues to be on fire! The folks in the San Antonio/Seguin area were absolutely wonderful to the regional coordinators and staff members that met in retreat at Texas Lutheran University last November. (The menu was Texas-appropriate, including chili, tamales, fajitas, and barbecue!)

Soon after anti-bullying passed at the last ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the South Texas

chapter planned and executed a local training for a general audience, and then held a second training event that was specially designed for youth, young adult, and family congregational ministers. The chapter does not allow too much time to pass without a worship service to celebrate inclusivity at an area congregation. It is joyously anticipating being the host of another BIC training and is sponsoring a movie night, which will focus on the life of Bayard Rustin in this the 100th anniversary of his birth.

—René García, Regional Coordinator for Region 4

I N H O N O R O F...

In Honor of...

Honored by...

Rev. Kirk Anderson & Sheri Brown	In honor of the witness and ministry of Rev. Kirk Anderson & Sheri Brown	Allen & Marie Harper
Adam Bost	In honor of Adam Bost, a great son and friend	Sharon & John Bost
Joe Brown	In memory of Joe Brown	Mike Crandall
Sheri Brown	To God's Spirit moving within Sheri Brown	Rev. Kirk E. Anderson
Michael Crandall & Shawn Hudson	In honor of the wedding of Michael Crandall & Shawn Hudson	Sumner Riddick & Douglas Carl
Dennis Douglas	In honor of the work of Dennis Douglas, Director of Music Ministries, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Monona, Wis.	Members of the Sanctuary Choir at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Monona, Wis.
Emily Eastwood	In honor of Emily Eastwood's commitment and hard work on behalf of ReconcilingWorks' mission	Rev. Vicki L Pedersen & Rev. Martha Lang
Robert Matthew Eastwood	In memory of Robert Matthew Eastwood	Bob & Martha Eastwood, Deanna Eichler & Leslee Froehlich; Deborah Wilson
ELCA in Idaho Falls	In honor of the ELCA community in Idaho Falls, Idaho	Wayne & Cherie Stevens
Joanne Engquist & Kari Lipke	In honor of the wedding of Joanne Engquist & Kari Lipke	Chris Pollari & Ann Fereatz; and 14 anonymous
Mary Farmer	In honor of Mary Farmer, Brainerd, Minn.	Glenn R. Leaf & Patricia K. Lundeen
First Lutheran, St. Peter, Minn.	In honor of the people of First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minn., a Reconciling in Christ congregation.	Joanne Engquist & Kari Lipke
Roberto Flores	In honor of Father Roberto Flores	Kenneth E. Rozek
René García	In honor of René García, friend of the family	Rev. Kirk E. Anderson & Sheri Brown
Rev. Ginger Georgulas	In memory of Rev. Ginger Georgulas	Bob & Martha Eastwood, Fred & A.M. Krueger, ReconcilingWorks/North Texas
Virginia Kay Georgulas	In loving memory of my wife, Ginger Georgulas	Fred Behrmann
Rev. Anita Hill	In honor of the work of Rev. Anita Hill	Marta & Ron Lettofsky
Rev. Anita Hill	In honor of Rev. Anita Hill's 60th birthday	Dan Ranum
Paul & Karen Jolly	In honor of Paul & Karen Jolly for their faithful work on behalf of ReconcilingWorks	Jeannine Janson & Mari Irvin
Marie Kent	In memory of Marie Kent, one of the founders of Lutherans Concerned	Rev. Barbara Lundblad & Nicole Johnson
Frank Loulan	In honor of Frank Loulan	Judy Garza & David Baram
Anders Mathiasen	In honor of Anders Mathiasen	Kathy & Jim Shattuck
Doyle Morris	In memory of Doyle Morris	Wayne Morris
Wayne Morris & Steve Miller	In honor of Wayne Morris & Steve Miller	Lucienne Morris
Jan Owen	In memory of Jan Owen	Bob & Martha Eastwood
Tracy Philbeck	In honor of Tracy Philbeck, Gaston County (North Carolina) Commissioner	Sara Bone
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
Rev. Charles Worley	In honor of Rev. Charles Worley, Providence Road Baptist Church, Maiden, N.C.	Elizabeth Swanson, Ami Layton, Sue King, Marilyn Stoeckig, Susan & Mark Bolick, Bonnie Jean Doerr, Michael Flanagan, Beth Bennett-Hill & Rev. Dr. J. David Hill, Amy & Robert Carpenter, Sheila Linn, Sara Bone, Amanda K. Hefner, and Anonymous