



EXTRAORDINARY  
LUTHERAN  
MINISTRIES

# the mission

THE NEWSLETTER OF EXTRAORDINARY LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

## From the Co-Chairs

This summer's ELCA Churchwide Assembly was history in the making, as voting members amended ELCA policy to allow congregations and synods to exercise structured flexibility in decisions about blessing same-sex couples and calling pastors, deaconesses, diaconal ministers and associates in ministry in same-sex relationships. During the debate, many speakers made comparisons to the 1970's votes to allow the ordination of women. "Who now," our supporters asked, "would argue that women's ordination has been a mistake for our church?"

The comparison between the ordination of women and the new policy of "structured flexibility" is instructive in more ways than one. It reminds us that the church has survived seismic changes in policy and practice. It debunks the idea that such change could only be sustained if supported by an overwhelming majority of the church. The most important comparison though, we think, is with the status of women in the church and the status of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the church in the coming years. Anyone who lived through those decades of change knows that equality for women in the church's life and ministry did not come right away and has not yet come fully, a fact implicitly recognized by the Churchwide Assembly's decision to begin a study on the status of women in preparation for a new social statement on justice for women to be considered in 2015 – forty-five years after the policy excluding women from ordained ministry was removed.



Some have asked whether or not there is still a need for organizations like Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries now that the policies that created the need for our existence are gone. Some see the need for our work now more than ever. We believe there is still much to be done. As we go forward, we remain rooted in our mission statement: "Compelled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to seek justice, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries expands ministry opportunities for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the Lutheran church." Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries has served this mission in multiple ways since our work began twenty years ago. We will continue until the need is met.

In Christ,

Rev. Erik Christensen

Lois Voss

Co-Chairs, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries



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# ELM Awards Dinner Recognizes Volunteer & Scholar

In August, supporters of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries gathered to honor long-time volunteer and former board member Lynn Mickelson and 2009 Joel Workin Scholar Julie Boleyn.

Mickelson has advocated for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the Lutheran Church for over 20 years, serving in numerous capacities for ELM and our predecessor organizations. She also has served with our coalition partner, Lutherans Concerned, as national co-chair. Mickelson is a staff attorney for Minnesota AIDS Project and lives in St. Paul with her partner, Sherry Kilburn. Former co-chair Greg Egertson presented Lynn Mickelson with her award.



Lynn Mickelson



Julie Boleyn, Jeanine Reardon,  
and their daughter, Madelyn

LSTC seminarian Julie Boleyn was named as the 2009 Joel R. Workin Scholar. ELM provides the \$1,000 scholarship to an ELM seminary student who embodies a gospel-centered passion for justice and devotion to faith in Jesus Christ. Donations to the Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholarship Fund make this possible. Joel's parents, Ray and Betty, and his brother Leon were on hand for the presentation.

Boleyn is in her fourth year at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She lives in Chicago with her partner, Jeanine Reardon, and their daughter, Madelyn.

Joel Workin came out twenty years ago while in seminary, sparking the movement that led to Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. Once Joel came out, his certification for ordination was vacated when Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) bishops refused to place his name on the roster of approved candidates awaiting call. The Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholarship was established in 1995 by the generosity of Joel's family, colleagues and close friends.

There was a special live auction of one of the last remaining copies of the first edition of Joel Workin's book, "Dear God, I am Gay...Thank you!" The copy sold for \$700. In a dramatic moment following the auction, ELM Covenant Circle board member former Bishop Paul Egertson produced his personal copy, which sold to the second bidder for \$625!

The second edition of the book is scheduled to come out in late 2009. 🍊

## Your ELM Gift at Work: Grace Lutheran Church

This year, one of the ministries you are supporting through your gifts to ELM is Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas. Grace is a recipient of a \$15,000 2009 ELM Mission Partner grant.

Since ELM pastor Rev. Lura Groen was ordained and installed at Grace in July of 2008, the congregation has thrived. A recent Grace Newsletter shares this good news: In the last year, "worship attendance has nearly doubled. Seven new members have joined this year, and another New Member class starts again soon. Member giving is at 108% of our ambitious goal. Our budget is nearly balanced... Less tangible, but just as real, is the joy and purpose we at Grace feel... Amazing energy has been released in this congregation. Not only is there a powerful urge for mission, but there also exists a creative, playful force among us."

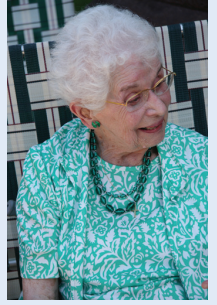
One of the most exciting developments this year has been a renewed mission focus for the congregation. After careful planning and dreaming, Grace is launching a ministry focusing on homeless gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual youth in their neighborhood.

Because of the financial support of donors like you, Grace's mission and ministry continue to grow. 🍊



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# Planning for ELM's Future: Donor Blanche Grube



Blanche Grube's sense of personal stewardship began in her earliest days with her childhood Lutheran pastor. She said he gave a "vision of the Church as broad institution, not just our local congregation." This early framework led to a lifetime of support for institutions like seminaries, hospitals, mission development and organizations like Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries.

When Blanche graduated from high school at age 16, she intended to go to medical school. However, her father's unexpected death changed those plans. The family's financial situation changed, even as her mother went to work as a matron in a factory. "With the great wisdom of a 16-year-old," Blanche laughs, "I decided that I would put myself through nursing school, save money and then go to medical school." As Blanche learned more about nursing, however, she changed her mind. "I found that I loved nursing. I did go back for more education—but in nursing, not medical school. And I have never regretted it."

"All my life, whenever I got a promotion," Blanche said, "I gave my mother more money and I gave my church more money. This was just a part of my expression of gratitude."

When asked what led to her involvement with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries, Blanche quickly replied, "Oh, easy! I was asked to be a member of Erik Christensen's support committee when he came to our congregation for his year as vicar. And it wasn't very long before I learned about Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries and that was how I got involved." [Ed: Rev. Erik Christensen is on the ELM Roster and currently serves as co-chair].

Last summer, Blanche gave a charitable gift annuity to Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries, our first planned gift. Planned gifts are ways to make a gift of lasting impact to ELM. In 2008, ELM established the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries Endowment Fund to support ministry by openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender candidates.

Blanche spoke about her decision. "I already had charitable annuities with other non-profit groups and so I knew a great deal about how they worked. The gift for Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries came my way through a totally unexpected inheritance from an older couple that I had befriended a long time ago. By then I had gotten to be a serious supporter of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries so I thought, let me give that money to them."

"Now the big problem with charitable annuities of course," continues Blanche, "is that it gives the money for an organization's endowment, but it doesn't give them actual cash to use for the day to day operations. But I made the extra commitment that half the income I would get from the annuity would go back as a donation each year to the annual operating costs, so it's a little bit of cash now for Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries."

Blanche knows the work is not over, despite all the recent advances. "I do feel very strongly that there will continue to be a great need for ELM to continue its work, because people, congregations are not going to be able to rapidly move into this new phase in whatever form it takes. So we are still going to need to continue our efforts to have gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual people be able to serve fully and completely in the Church we all love so much."

In closing Blanche said emphatically, "I am grateful for the opportunity to encourage other people to continue and if possible to grow in their support of ELM and its activities."

To learn more about the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries Endowment Fund and how you can make a planned gift now to support the future ministry of Lutheran pastors of all sexualities and genders, please call Executive Director, Amalia Vagts, at 563-382-6277. 🍎

"I am grateful for the opportunity to encourage other people to continue and if possible to grow in their support of ELM and its activities."

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## Jim & Diane DeLange Birthday Brings in \$1,850 for ELM...

Pastor Jim DeLange was serving St. Francis Lutheran Church in 1990 when that congregation, along with First United Lutheran Church, was placed on trial for violating church policies regarding the ordination and call of openly gay, non-celibate pastors. Pastor DeLange was instrumental in the formation of Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries and led the organization for many years. Both Pastor DeLange and Diane have been long-time supporters and friends to the organization.

At a joint birthday celebration this summer, the DeLanges selected three organizations to benefit from the generosity of their friends and family. Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries was fortunate to be included in the three, and received \$1,850 in donations. We give thanks to Jim and Diane DeLange for this act, for their previous acts of generosity, and for all the friends and family who gave gifts to ELM in their honor! 🍎

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## Visit [www.elm.org](http://www.elm.org) to make your gift in honor or memory of your loved one.

### In Honor of...

Honor of Rev. Jen Rude, from Rev. Ron & Nancy Rude  
Honor of Ordination of Rev. Susan Masters, from Raymond Sanders  
Honor of Marriage of Amalia Vagts & David Lester, from Lois & Ray Voss, Matthew Erickson  
Honor of Jay Carlson & Kristen Helvig, from Brant & Sharon Groen  
Honor of Marriage Equality, from Rick & Orte Knight  
Honor of Jim & Diane DeLange, from many

### In Memory of...

Memory of George Cheney, from Keith Wolter  
Memory of St. Wilgefortis, from Rev. Megan Rohrer  
Memory of Arnold Tiemeyer, from Marti Scheel  
Memory of Arnold Tiemeyer, from Karen & David Olson  
Memory of Paul Clark, from Ted & Jane Clark

## ELM Celebrates the life of Arnold Tiemeyer

Arnold passed away Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2009 from cancer. Arnold served most recently as chair of the East Coast Candidacy Panel and was a devoted supporter of the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people called to ordained ministry in the Lutheran church.

We celebrate Arnold's life and all he did to make the Church a truly welcoming place. We express our sadness and prayers to his partner, Betsy, and their family.

### ELM is now on Twitter

[twitter.com/ELM2649](https://twitter.com/ELM2649) and don't forget to check out blog at [extraordinarylutheranministries.blogspot.com](http://extraordinarylutheranministries.blogspot.com)



On the day the ELCA was considering changing its policies regarding LGBT pastors, we received a generous donation with these words,

**"In thanksgiving for all the work that ELM and predecessor bodies have done in the past 19 years and knowing that however the votes today at CWA go, the work of ELM continues."**

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