



EXTRAORDINARY
LUTHERAN
MINISTRIES

the mission

THE NEWSLETTER OF EXTRAORDINARY LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

PARADIGM SHIFT

a change from one way of thinking to another,
driven by agents of change

A Time of Change for ELM

The Lutheran church and the movement for full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, and queer people experienced a paradigm shift in the past year. In this time of change, ELM is responding to both present and emerging needs of LGBTQ people called to rostered leadership in the Lutheran church.

It has been over a year since the ELCA's decision to change their ministry policies to allow for gay and lesbian people in relationships to serve as rostered leaders. During that time, ELM has been involved with the implementation of the policies and the process by which ELM roster members would be welcomed to the ELCA Roster. (You can read about these developments in the article *"Echoing the Voices of the Past"* on page 2).

Some of our supporters have asked: Is ELM's work finished? No, our work is not finished. But our work is changing. The Covenant Circle, ELM's leadership body, recently held a retreat to evaluate our vision and mission, and imagine how to do our best work in this current environment. Far from feeling our work was completed, we left our retreat deeply energized about the new direction and work ahead of us. You have been invested in the work of ELM—and we are thankful everyday for the supporters who make it possible for us to work towards our mission.

At this defining moment, we believe that ELM has a unique opportunity to change the church, and in turn, transform society through the ministries of LGBTQ rostered leaders. LGBTQ rostered leaders know what it is like to be on the margins of the church. As newly-welcomed members of the ELCA Lutheran roster, these leaders are poised to offer an evangelical outreach to all people who long to be connected to the church, but who have not heard that word of welcome.





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Echoing the Voices of Others

It was an historic summer and fall for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as services of welcome for ELM pastors took place across the denomination. In the language of the rite, the services “echo the voices of others” as these pastors were recognized by the ELCA and welcomed to the ELCA clergy roster. ELM provided the path to ministry for each of these pastors. For years, ELM provided the necessary resources to support these pastors. Now we celebrate with the ELCA as the ministry of these pastors is recognized and affirmed by the ELCA. At present, seventeen ELM pastors have been received or reinstated to the ELCA clergy roster.



Some “voices:” Extraordinary Candidacy Project founders.

Rev. Jeff Johnson, Rev. Megan Rohrer, Rev. Paul Brenner, Rev. Craig Minich, Rev. Dawn Roginski, Rev. Sharon Stalkfleet and Rev. Ross Merkel

The service combined the rite of reception with a service of reconciliation and a festive Eucharist. More than 500 people attended. Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, pastor at House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, Colorado preached.

Rev. Anita Hill, Rev. Ruth Frost and Rev. Phyllis Zillhart

The service included a Litany of Confession led by former ELCA Presiding Bishop Herb Chilstrom; a sermon by the Rev. Barbara Lundblad; a long, vibrant clergy processional, and hundreds of visibly-moved attendees. St. Paul Area Synod Bishop Peter Rogness presided, along with Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop Craig Johnson.

Rev. Jen Nagel

The service was energizing, and many in the congregation were actively involved. The Rite of Reception occurred during a morning worship service at Salem English Lutheran Church, where Pastor Jen has served since 2003. Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop Craig Johnson presided.

Rev. Erik Christensen

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod received Rev. Christensen in a late Sunday afternoon service. Bishop Wayne Miller presided. Many from Pastor Erik’s congregation, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square, attended.

Rev. Donna Simon

The Central States Synod of the ELCA received Rev. Simon in an evening service on Thursday, Oct 28, held at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Kansas City. Bishop Gerry Mansholt presided and much of the service was led by members of Pastor Donna’s congregation, Abiding Peace Lutheran Church.

Rev. Jodi Barry

Members of Grace University Lutheran Church and friends from throughout the Minneapolis Area Synod and beyond gathered for the service of reception for Rev. Barry. Bp. Craig Johnson presided at the service.

Rev. Lura Groen

“No Longer Strangers” was the theme of the only Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Rite of Reception. Bp. Michael Rineholt presided. Area rostered leaders and congregants participated in the service of thanksgiving and reception. Rev. Patrick Keen from New Orleans preached.

ELM'S NEW APPROACH

ELM is not proposing a radical shift in our vision and mission. We are embarking on a new approach to realize our vision and achieve our mission. ELM's vision and mission remain constant.

ELM's vision is the full inclusion of all people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the Lutheran Church – we share this vision with our movement partners.

ELM's mission is to expand ministry opportunities for publicly-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people who are called to ordained and lay rostered leadership in the Lutheran Church.

ELM's core belief is that the ministries of publicly-identified LGBTQ clergy and rostered lay leaders will change the culture of the church and transform society.



Rev. Robyn Hartwig (EcoFaith Recovery) and a friend have a vision.

OVERVIEW of NEW DIRECTION

Our work has historically centered in three primary areas: candidacy, community and grants. These three areas remain our focus, with a new approach in some of these areas.

CANDIDACY: We will shift from our past work—providing an extraordinary candidacy process—to focus on candidacy support and accompaniment for publicly-identified LGBTQ person who are in Lutheran candidacy. ELM is currently developing a volunteer-based network of accompaniment for LGBTQ people in Lutheran candidacy. ELM will provide resources, chaplain support, advocacy and referrals.

COMMUNITY: In the past, the ELM Roster has been ELM's community of LGBTQ rostered leaders. Now, we are launching a professional network of publicly-identified LGBTQ rostered leaders from multiple Lutheran rosters. These leaders are committed to changing the church and transforming society through their ministry as publicly-identified LGBTQ rostered leaders. ELM will hold an annual conference/retreat open to all, provide year-round online networking, and professional development opportunities, chaplain support, and visibility.

GRANTS: We will continue to provide mission partner grants and scholarships for publicly-identified LGBTQ people called to and serving as rostered leaders in the Lutheran church.

Some of this language seems new. Can you explain?

“LGBTQ”

At different times, we've used different language to describe our community. We once used “gay and lesbian,” then added “bisexual and transgender.” We've also used “sexual minorities” and “all sexual orientations and gender identities.” In the past, the ELCA policy that clearly discriminated based on sexual orientation made our focus clear. Post-policy change, we'll describe our focus by using “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer” or LGBTQ. For some people, the inclusion of the word “queer” might be confusing. This word was once a derogatory term for gay people. Currently, many people use “queer” as a positive, inclusive term that describes people along the sexual and gender spectrum.

“Publicly-identified”

The LGBTQ movement has used words like “out,” “open,” “visible,” “transparent,” and “honest” to describe a person who is self-aware and public about their sexual orientation and gender identity. We notice two things about these words: they use the framework of the “closet,” and can convey a judgment about the decision to state one's sexual orientation or gender identity. We have created divisions and wounds in our own community through the use of some of these words. A clarifying and defining statement that emerged during our planning meeting is that it has always been a primary strategy of ELM's movement to change the culture of the church through the witness of LGBTQ leaders. This is not a judgment about the decision to be public or private; rather it is ELM's core approach to changing the church. We found the phrase “publicly-identified” to be the ideal way to describe our core constituency. This applies as well to transgender people in our movement—the decision to be public about one's gender is a personal choice. Our focus is on transgender people who choose to be public about their gender identity as a way of changing the church.

“Clergy and rostered lay leaders”

Several years ago, ELM expanded our candidacy and rostering language to include the rostered lay leaders of the ELCA. We've been spotty in our language around this change and we have not made a consistent effort to intentionally reach out to the rostered lay leaders of the ELCA. As we look to an expanding community, the ELM Covenant Circle affirms and deepens our commitment to include rostered lay leaders.

**ELM roster members reinstated
to the ELCA clergy roster:**

Rev. Jenny Mason & Rev. Dale Poland

**ELM candidates who have
been welcomed into ELCA
candidacy:**

Julie Boleyn, Matt James, Cara Knutson

Others:

There continue to be other ELM roster members who are seeking reception or reinstatement to the ELCA clergy roster. Your contributions help as we continue to support these pastors.

Upcoming services:

Rev. Jay Wiesner (Dec 12, 2010) &
Rev. Steve Keiser (Jan 2, 2011),
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

PROPHETS & WORKERS: A Campaign for ELM

As we roll out the new work for ELM, we know that we need energized, committed supporters to help us fund this important work. In 2011, we will be asking all of our current and future donors to make a three-year commitment to funding ELM's new direction.

For some of you, this will be a commitment to continue giving at the same level for the next three years. Others may be able to make a modest increase in giving for the next three years. And we trust that many ELM supporters will want to make a bold investment in our new vision.

This campaign—Prophets and Workers—is designed to ensure that ELM can grow responsibly and sustainably in these next three critical years. We cannot do it without you. The Campaign Co-chairs are Jim Kowalksi, from San Francisco, CA and Bonny Vaught from Easthampton, MA. Honorary Co-Chairs are Rev. Jen Nagel, from Minneapolis, MN and Rev. Erik Christensen, from Chicago, IL.

You will hear much more about Prophets and Workers in 2011!

You can find more detailed information about all of these changes on our website.

Learn more and give online at www.elm.org

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