

The Newsletter *

(*Until a name/logo is chosen!!!)

"Giving Voice to Vision in the San Francisco/Greater Bay Area!"

Vol 2: No 1

Ordination Issue 1990

50 ELCA Clergy Expected to Participate in Service of Ordination

**Dr. Carter Heyward to Preach. Dr. Krister Stendahl to send Greeting.
"City Swing" to play at Gala Benefit Celebration at the Hotel Nikko**

The first day of the new year! And what a year it will prove to be. This edition of *The Newsletter* will be the last before the day of ordination on the 20th. Special attention is given in the following pages to this event and to the Benefit Banquet following the ordination service. If you haven't already, now is the time to reserve space to this exciting after-ordination dance/celebration!

Also, as I write these words, Ruth and Phyllis have begun their cross-country journey out to California. The three of us will begin working as a team very shortly.

I can't tell you how exciting all of this is. We are watching a dream come alive. Before Ruth and Phyllis left, they read to me over the phone some articles of introduction which I am including as well in this edition.

In somewhat random order, let me highlight some of the important and interesting developments since the last edition went out in mid-December.

•Plans are well underway for the **Festival Service of Ordination** on January 20. Over 40 persons are involved with the planning and implementation of the

service and we expect a crowd (700-900) which will fill the large sanctuary. Between 34-60 clergy are expected to lay hands during the rite of ordination itself.

•Dr. Carter Heyward was contacted and agreed to preach at the ordination service here in San Francisco. Dr. Heyward is an Episcopal priest (one of the original women to be ordained in 1976), a lesbian, a feminist, and one of the preeminent theologians in the church today. She is the professor of theology at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is the author of several books including *Our Passion for Justice and God's Fierce Whimsy*. Her latest work, *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God*, has been described as "dangerous," "a bold and

passionate statement on behalf of revolutionary Christianity," and "astoundingly powerful."

•In addition at the service of ordination, a greeting will be read by **Dr. Krister Stendahl**, currently at Harvard Divinity School, and formerly the Lutheran Archbishop of Sweden. Unable to physically be present at the ordination itself because of a trip overseas, Bishop Stendahl expressed a desire to respond somehow to the significant event happening here in California. Bishop Stendahl is greatly respected as a leading world Lutheran theologian and has written extensively on issues of justice as they confront society and the church.

•The November/December reaction to the votes of St. Francis and First United has been overwhelmingly positive. Both St. Francis and First United have received many letters of support and encouragement from persons who have read and heard of their actions.

•Publicity has been widespread. Shortly after the call by St. Francis, Ruth and Phyllis were deluged with newspaper interviews and appeared on a number of TV shows., appearing together even with the Bishop of the St. Paul Synod on a panel/talk show. At Lutheran Northwestern Seminary, an invitation for Ruth to address the student and faculty community was thwarted by leading administration officials who believed that such discussion would be counterproductive.

Random Notes cont. on page 5



January 14, 1990
Lutherans Concerned Reception

January 19, 1990
Reception hosted by Dale & Betty Johnson and friends of Ruth & Phyllis

January 20, 1990
Ordination Service
Simultaneous Worship Services

Gala Benefit Celebration

January 21, 1990
Installations at First United and St.

**LUTHERAN
LESBIAN & GAY MINISTRY**

LLGM is an emerging coalition of lay individuals, clergy, congregations and other communities of faith committed to the Gospel, to lesbian/gay ordained pastoral leadership and to progressive ministry with, by and for the lesbian/gay community.

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The Newsletter is published monthly by the LUTHERAN LESBIAN & GAY MINISTRY of the San Francisco/Greater Bay Area.

The mailing list for *The Newsletter* is composed of individuals who have themselves indicated interest as well as those who have been recommended for inclusion to us. If you have names to add or wish to be dropped from the mailing list, please let us know and the appropriate changes will be made. *The Newsletter* will be mailed in plain envelopes to persons who request it.

The Newsletter is edited each month by Jeff Johnson. An Editorial Board sets policy for the Newsletter.

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Some Introductory Comments From Ruth . . .

A blessed New Year to all of you receiving *The Newsletter*. Jeff, Phyllis and I send you greetings and wish to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves to those of you who do not know us.

I write this as I sit in front of our Christmas tree in Minnesota surrounded not by presents but by packing crates bound for San Francisco. Tomorrow is New Years Eve and I will celebrate by reflecting on the gifts of this past year and the gifts still to come in 1990. Beside my partnership with Phyllis, I believe the ministry of LLGM is my greatest gift this Christmas. It comes after having given up five years ago the long cherished dream of ministry in the church. A dream I thought was lost when I became unwilling to deny both my identity as a lesbian and the goodness of my partnership.

Periodically people will say to me: "Ruth, why do you want to serve a church that doesn't want you." That's a tough question. But my roots in the Lutheran church are deep. I come from three generations of Lutheran clergy. I have experienced the power of Christian community to heal, to support and to enliven the Gospel, even as I have experienced the power of the institution to exclude and reject. I believe the spirit is moving in the people of this church and I believe the congregations of St. Francis and First United are prayerful witnesses to this movement.

In the 60's I was a young college student confronted for the first time with my racism by the Black Rights Movement. I believe the Gay Rights Movement of the 80's owes its life to Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of dignity, respect and justice for all. King envisioned God's kingdom as an earthly as well as heavenly place of belonging for all of God's children.

I believe Jesus is calling the children, and that it is time for all of these little ones—the butches, the dykes, the pansies, the sissys, the fairies and the faggots—all those forbidden by over-institutionalized

disciples to come home. I see the ministry of LLGM as tapping a long history of personal homecoming. Coming home to myself, my family, my beloved and now finally to my church.

It's a journey I hope we can all make together. I ask your prayers for the way.

*Peace,
Ruth*

From Phyllis. . .

"And when the dew evaporated, there was something thin and flaky on the surface of the desert. When the Israelites saw it, they didn't know what it was and asked each other, 'What is it?'" Ex 16:14 & 15

At the age of six, I voiced my intention to pursue ordained pastoral ministry. I was female. I was from a small, southwest Minnesota farming town. I was from a family without higher education. I was only six years old. My vacation-bible school teacher was visibly shocked and disapproving.

At the age of 28, I voiced my intention to relinquish my pursuit of ordained pastoral ministry. I had been certified through the seminary. I had just completed a year as an Interim Pastor. I was scheduling congregational interviews. I was in a closeted relationship that was worth the loss of a life's dream for the joy of claiming a love that touched the marrow of my soul. My bishop was surprised, saddened and perplexed by my unequivocal stand.

At the age of 32, I received the call to serve at St. Francis Lutheran Church. I am to work with my beloved Ruth. We are to team with Jeff in developing an authentic program of spiritual care and healing for gay men and lesbians. Now it is my turn to be overwhelmed, scared and amazed.

Introductions cont. on page 5

First United Lutheran Church
St. Francis Lutheran Church and the
Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministry

invite you to a celebration
of the Holy Eucharist
on the occasion of the
ordination of
Jeff Johnson,
Ruth Frost, and Phyllis Zillhart
to the Ministry of
Word and Sacrament

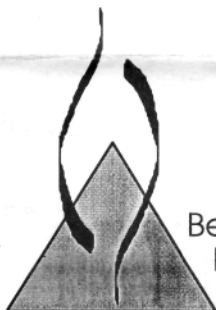
Saturday afternoon

January 20, 1990

at 4:00, p.m. (seating at 3:30)

St. Paulus Lutheran Church
Gough and Eddy Streets, SF

•Dr. Carter Heyward, Preacher



Behold,
I am doing
a new thing . . .

A Gala Banquet/Celebration to benefit
LLGM will be held Saturday Evening at
7:30p.m. at the Hotel Nikko.
Call 553-4026 before 1/17/90
for information and reservations.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1/14

Ecumenical Reception Sunday Afternoon

2-6 pm

Lutherans Concerned together with local lesbian/gay religious caucuses has co-sponsored an open-house at 176 Liberty, SF; ph# 285-0794. All are welcome!

1/19

LLGM Reception

Friday Evening

7-10 pm

A reception to Meet Jeff, Ruth & Phyllis is being hosted by Dale & Betty Johnson and friends and family of Ruth & Phyllis. It will be held at the home of Cheryl Arnold & John Frykman (751 47th Ave. between Balboa & Cabrillo; ph#387-1305. Ample street parking is available or take a MUNI Bus—38 Geary-Ocean Beach, 31 Balboa, 5 Fulton, or 18 Sloat.

1/20

Ordination Service

Saturday Afternoon

4pm (seating:3:30)

St. Paulus Lutheran (corner of Gough and Eddy, SF). Seating and preparation for the procession will begin at 3:30. Dr. Carter Heyward will preach. Greetings from Bishop Krister Stendahl will be read. Sign Language Interpretation provided. Wheelchair assistance available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ordination Service

All three candidates will be ordained at this service. They will be installed and celebrate their first Mass at separate services at St. Francis and First United on Sunday morning. Nearly 50 ELCA clergy representing over 80 who have signed the *Covenant of Support* are expected to participate in the service of ordination. Bishop Lyle Miller of the Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA will not attend. Representatives from the Bay area religious and lesbian/gay community will attend.

A large Bay area choir is organizing to provide special music. Rehearsals for this choir have been scheduled at St. Paulus Lutheran Church at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 11 and Wednesday, January 17. Cheryl Arnold (751 8108) should be contacted by anyone interested in joining this choir. Parking/transportation: St. Paulus is served by the 31 Balboa on Eddy Street, the Geary Street and Van Ness Street lines.

Gala Celebration

This is our inaugural fund-raising event. It is important for the work of the ministry as well as to our public and synodical witness, that the gala raise \$10,000. Therefore, we have set a price of \$100/person. The dinner, the room, hotel staff,

1/20 (Evening)

Gala Benefit/Dance Celebration

Saturday Evening

7:30-12:30

A *Gala Celebration & Dance* to benefit LLGM will be held at the Hotel Nikko (222 Mason at O'Farrell; ph# 394-1111).

7:30—Gathering and no host cocktails

8:30—Dinner

9:30—Dancing to the big band sound of "City

Swing." Donation: \$100. Reduced price tickets are available for individuals with limited incomes and PWAs.

Tickets are available by calling 553-4026 or from your local representative. See announcements for more details.

1/21

Installations

January 21, 1990

Sunday Morning

10:00 at First United (6555 Geary Blvd., ph#751-8108) Jeff to be installed. Joel Workin will be preaching.

11:00 at St. Francis Lutheran Church (152 Church, ph# 621-2635). Ruth and Phyllis to be installed.

entertainment, and related costs will total approximately \$35 per person. The \$35 "base price" covers cost of the event, and we are encouraging an added donation of \$65 to the ministry. All supporters of this ministry are encouraged to attend and we do not wish cost to be a factor against anyone attending and celebrating with us. Low-income and PWA/PWARC are available for our cost (\$35) plus any additional donation these persons are able to make. Providing the ministry with the added financial strength crucial to its success is important at this beginning stage. Additional tickets may be ordered from Edward Gray (863-8517) or the LLGM office (553-4026). Checks should be made out to "LLGM".

Some parking at the Nikko. Nearby lots at 260 O'Farrell, the Hilton Hotel (261 Ellis St.) or call Metro Parking (989 5100). Take the 31 Balboa on Eddy or the 38 Geary on O'Farrell from St. Paulus. BART station nearby at Powell.

Hospitality

Our ministry is new but has many enthusiastic supporters from outside the Bay area. Housing is needed for approximately 30 of these people. The Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Golden Gate Church, 584-3237, or your regional representative, should be contacted by anyone willing to act as host to our out-of-town supporters on Friday and Saturday, January 19 and 20th.

Introductions cont

"What is it?" It is a new thing that God is doing through the renewed people of God. It is spirituality and sexuality proclaimed as life-giving and essential for human wholeness. It is the challenge to hear anew voices from those excluded—women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, PWAs/PWARCs, the poor and displaced.

We as lesbians, gay men and our supporters have found our voices and are delivered from the bondage of fear and shame. Yes, we await the promised land of justice and freedom. In the desert we are sustained by the bounty of community and compassion, by honest striving and by the wonder of new creation.

"What is it?" It is a cup of cool water, a kind word in tense times, a hand held in a homophobic world, a protest against cruelty. Manna in the desert, the body and blood of the Christ. It is enough for the journey for it is given for you.

Phyllis!

Gala Benefit/Celebration to feature City Swing Orchestra

A Gala Celebration to benefit LLGM will follow the service of ordination on Saturday, January 20, 1990.

Since we began organizing over a year ago, there has been no time to "pull out the stops" and celebrate LLGM's vision and our accomplishments. The Gala Benefit will be an opportunity to applaud the successes of the past year and to celebrate the vision of this new and exciting ministry.

A no-host bar and dinner will be followed by City Swing, an 18 piece swing/jazz orchestra which will provide dancing until early Sunday morning (12:30a.m.).

Plan to celebrate with us. Call (415) 553-4026 or send in the request below for tickets. Limited Income & PWA/PWARC tickets are available at reduced rates.

Please call for information.

Gala Benefit Celebration & Dance

for the Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministry

Saturday, January 20, 1990

Hotel Nikko, Mason & O'Farrell, San Francisco

7:30 p.m. Gathering and No-Host Bar

8:30 p.m. Dinner & Dancing

with the big band sound of "City Swing"

- ☐ Please reserve _____ spaces. Enclosed is a check for \$ _____
(Suggested donation is \$100/person)
☐ Please reserve a table for ten. Enclosed is a check for \$1,000.
☐ I cannot attend. Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____.

Donation is \$100/person. Make checks payable to LLGM.
Limited Income & PWA/PWARC tickets are available at a reduced rate.

Please call 553-4026 for information. Reserve seats by January 16, 1990.

Random Notes cont

•Over 200 supporters of Ruth and Phyllis gathered in Minnesota in mid-December to bid them farewell and good luck! We expect them to arrive in the City just in time for the festivities. Let's hope!!

•We are not alone in this struggle! December 16 witnessed the ordination (with the support of the Bishop and diocese!) of gay episcopal priest Rev. Robert Williams in New Jersey. Bishop John Spong presided. Increasingly it is evident that we are in the midst of a movement which is definitely "coming of age" in religious communities throughout the nation.

•Our own Bishop Lyle Miller has decided that it is in the best interest of this synod for him to initiate disciplinary charges against both congregations once the three ordinands are installed as assistant pastors. Such installations will occur on Sunday morning, January 21. In an action subsequent to the decision of the Bishop, the Synod Council of the Sierra Pacific Synod voted to initiate charges against the churches with him. While it is clear that these two congregations face disciplinary hearings for calling pastors not on the approved roster of the church, LLGM has been unable to obtain a clear statement about potential discipline for Clergy

Signers of the Covenant who participate in the rite of ordination itself. It appears that of the over 80 clergy who have signed, 40+ will be able to be present at the service itself.

As I look back over the past 10-12 months and the development of LLGM, we have indeed come a long way and accomplished all of what we set out to do. As we wait for our ordinations, and installations, we are poised and well positioned to establish a vital, credible and exciting ministry in this area. Keep praying! Keep struggling! Gladid Jul! and Happy New Year!

Joe