



EXTRAORDINARY
LUTHERAN
MINISTRIES

the mission

THE NEWSLETTER OF EXTRAORDINARY LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

2012 Proclaim Retreat: Let's Go, Everyone!

About 70 LGBTQ rostered leaders, candidates and seminarians and their families gathered in April at Stony Point Center in New York for the Proclaim retreat, *Vamos Tod@s*. What a gathering!

This annual retreat began in 1993 with seven people. A core value of the retreat is bringing renewal to this community so they are refreshed to go forth with their ministry. Attendees pay their own registration and travel costs. Supporters of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries help cover additional expenses and scholarships. This year 19 attended with the help of a scholarship. In addition, the Proclaim program is supported by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and the Advent Lutheran Church (NY) Mission Fund. The planning team included the Rev. Julie Boleyn (Overall), the Rev. Brad Froslee (Program), and the Rev. Tim Weisman (Worship). This team was supported by many volunteers who organized an outstanding retreat. We were blessed by the presence of Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson and other gifted workshop presenters.

The following page includes some personal reflections from retreat attendees.



Attendees at the 2012 Proclaim Retreat



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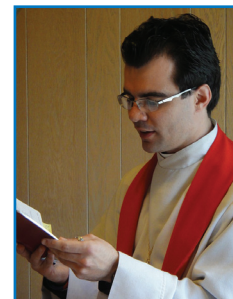
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MISSION

*expanding ministry opportunities
for publicly-identified LGBTQ
Lutheran rostered leaders who are
changing the church and society
through their ministry*

Proclaim Retreat Reflections

Kevin O'Hara: "As a pastor, I found this retreat informational and inspirational. As a gay man, I found this retreat welcoming and affirming. As a gay pastor-well, this is where I found home and a breath of fresh air: I never realized how lonely I was to live and work as a gay pastor in a part of the synod where there isn't much support until I realized how full I felt here."



Kevin O'Hara



Becca Seely

Becca Seely: "As a student at an ecumenical divinity school on the East Coast, I sometimes feel a bit isolated from the wider ELCA community of seminarians and pastors. This was my first Proclaim retreat and it has been an incredible blessing to me in the relationships I have made. I had never met an out LGBT Lutheran pastor before and now I have so many amazing role models who have shared their stories and their important work with me. I feel confident now that I can be fully myself as I serve the church and that's really exciting. I leave this retreat feeling like I cannot wait to be a pastor!"

Jason Clifton: "The retreat gave me a better understanding of what it meant to be a part of the Proclaim. In the following days I have found just how much the retreat impacted me. I have found myself willing to be even more open about my sexuality and the gifts that I bring to the table. Also it was a new realization to think of one's call to ministry being intertwined with one's coming out story. In short, this for me means to not talk about my coming out story as if it did not have a profound impact on my life and my call to ministry, but rather include it in my call story. In fact, I would say not only to include it but claim to it. Meeting other members of Proclaim I have once again been empowered to be bold and faithful in who God has created me to be."



Jason Clifton



Asher O'Callaghan

Asher O'Callaghan: "I arrived at the retreat somewhat apprehensive... Having just completed my Entrance Interview a couple weeks before, I was feeling similarly apprehensive about the candidacy process before me and how being transgender and bisexual might impact the opportunities for ministry I have access to. I left the retreat feeling supported and encouraged by the presence of LGBTQ friends and colleagues actively engaged in a variety of ELCA ministries.... More than anything else, however, the retreat instilled me with a deep sense of blessing. I became convicted that I am standing on sacred ground... because of the work that has already been done by LGBTQ folks who have lived as God's witnesses, prophets, and servants to the church..."

This ground that I have the awesome opportunity to be standing on has been consecrated by the sacrifices, prayers, sweat, tears, witness, and labor of those who have gone before me blazing a path through the Wilderness. I leave the retreat feeling convicted, honored, and blessed to continue in this heritage of proclamation—with every aspect of my calling, ministry, and identity."

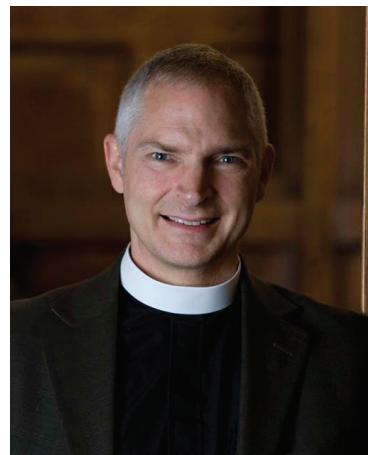
Save the Date:

2013 Proclaim Retreat, April 12-15 The Bishop's Ranch, Sonoma County, CA!

Welcome Back, Mike!

We welcome the Rev. Michael Wilker to the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries Board of Directors, serving as Co-Chair. Mike has been a long time supporter and leadership volunteer for ELM and its predecessor bodies. The Board and staff enthusiastically welcome him to this new role.

Mike writes, "Since 1990, my spouse Judy and I have actively supported ELM's mission and work. By our personal experience, prayer and study we are convinced that the ministers and ministries of ELM proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ compassionately and courageously." He previously served as a board member and co-chair of Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries and Call Process Coordinator for ELM. Mike was elected to a three-year term on the board and will share the Co-Chair role with the Rev. Jen Nagel.



Rev. Michael Wilker

Mike currently serves as senior pastor at Lutheran Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill and resides in Washington, D.C. with his family. Prior to his current call, Mike served as president of Lutheran Volunteer Corps for over six years. Ordained in 1995, he also served congregations in New York and California.

Candidacy Accompaniment: Moving Forward

ELM has been supporting and encouraging LGBTQ candidates seeking rostered ministry in the Lutheran church since we began. That effort has taken a new direction, however, since 2009 and new structure with the designation of a Candidacy Accompaniment Program in 2011 and the appointment of Randy A. Nelson to be the point person for that initiative. Nelson has convened an Advisory Team consisting of members from across the country to assist the program.

The number of LGBTQ persons in the candidacy process is significant. Initially, the role of the Accompaniment Program has been to make sure that LGBTQ candidates are aware of the program and of Randy's availability to support them in the process. Individual conversations with most of the identified candidates have taken place and relationships are being built.

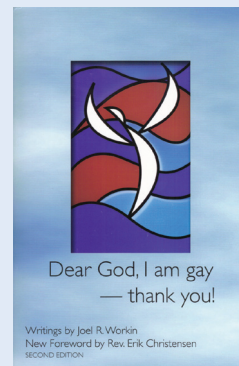
One of the next steps as identified by the Advisory Team is to develop relationships with synods and seminaries and to make resources available to both candidates and Candidacy Committees to ensure respectful, effective, and meaningful engagement throughout the candidacy process. By fall of this year, the team will develop a comprehensive communication plan to enhance the ability of all partners in the process to negotiate it successfully.

Contact Randy Nelson at candidacy@elm.org with questions or comments.

Becca Seely and Asher O'Callaghan Named Workin Scholars

May 29, 2012 would have been Joel R. Workin's 51 birthday. While Joel's life ended far too soon, his prophetic voice continues through his book, "Dear God, I am gay-thank you!" available from ELM and through the Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholar program. On Joel's birthday, the Workin Scholar Committee joyfully named the 2012 Workin Scholars, Asher O'Callaghan and Becca Seely. There were twice as many applicants as ever for this honor. The committee delighted in the way Asher and Becca exemplified Joel's prophetic voice and spirit. Check out Becca and Asher's photos and reflections from the retreat on the previous page. We'll have full profiles of both in our Fall 2012 Mission.

Please consider a planned gift to the Joel Workin Endowment Fund to ensure a pipeline of support for publicly identified LGBTQ seminary and divinity school students. Contact Amalia at director@elm.org for details.



Cover of 2nd Edition
of Joel Workin's Writings

ELM Roster • • • • •

Extraordinary Candidacy • • • • •

Ministry Grants to 47 • • • • •

► Proclaim

► Accompaniment

► Ministry Grants to 100+

ELM at a Glance: Before and After

We hear this question often: How have the 2009 ELCA ministry policy changes affected ELM? We'd love to come talk with you and your congregation or ministry in detail about this! In the meantime, here is a glance at how we have adjusted our three main programs to meet the present needs of LGBTQ rostered leaders and the church. In all this work, we seek to make real God's Great Welcome Table, where all people are invited to receive and share God's gifts.

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