



To: Proclaim Candidates for Rostered Ministry

From: The Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholarship Committee: Michael Price Nelson, Greg A. Egertson, the Rev. Jeff R. Johnson, the Rev. Becca Seely, Amalia Vagts

Date: March 8, 2017

Thank you for being a public witness to God's extraordinary love for our world!

We invite you to apply for a scholarship for publicly-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ Lutheran candidates for rostered ministry. The eligible applicant must be an LGBTQ+ candidate for rostered ministry who is a member of Proclaim, the professional community of publicly-identified LGBTQ+ Lutheran rostered ministers and candidates. Proclaim is a program of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. All application materials are due no later than Thursday, April 27, 2017.

This honor is given in the name of Joel Raydon Workin, one of our movement's saints. Joel was one of the three seminarians who came out about their sexual orientation to their Lutheran candidacy committees in 1989 (and were subsequently refused ordination). This act of faithfulness was the spark that ignited our movement of resistance and affirmation of LGBTQ+ people called to rostered ministry in the Lutheran church. Joel passed away from AIDS on November 29, 1995. Upon Joel's death, friends and family established a fund to honor his memory. Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries is the custodian of the fund and scholarship. Each year, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries names a Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholar.

This award comes with a financial scholarship of \$2,500 for qualified educational or candidacy expenses to an LGBTQ candidate for rostered ministry who embodies Joel's passion for justice and faith in life and ministry. In addition, the Scholar will be invited throughout the year to be involved with various ELM activities. We request that all funds be used prior to May 1, 2018 and that if possible, all funds are used for a single event or activity.

Previous Workin Scholars include the Rev. Jen Rude, the Rev. Matthew James, the Rev. Julie Boleyn, the Rev. Laura Kuntz, the Rev. Emily Ewing, the Rev. Rebecca Seely, the Rev. Asher O'Callaghan, the Rev. Gretchen Colby Rode, the Rev. Amy Hanson, Justin Ferko, and Christophor Gilbert.

Application Materials

The Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholar is someone whose character and abilities are consistent with Joel's legacy. Among these are: academic excellence, personal and professional integrity, courage in response to the church's discriminatory policies, a passion for social justice, faithfulness to Jesus Christ and potential to become an effective leader in church and society.

The scholarship application includes the following components:

- Essay. Attached is a PDF of Joel's essay, "Overflowing." Joel's writing is a gift and we hope you find his essays useful throughout your ministry. Joel was a brilliant writer and your essay is one of the most important parts of your application. This year's writing includes a brief paragraph response and a 1,000 – 1,500 word essay on the attached essay.
- A copy of your current resume. Please note any Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries/Proclaim activities.
- A professional recommendation from someone (professor, pastor or other rostered professional) who can testify to your qualifications specific to this honor and award. The recommendation letter should be on official letterhead.
- Copy of your transcript from seminary or divinity school (unofficial is fine).

All materials are due no later than Thursday, April 27, 2017. All application materials must be submitted electronically in PDF to director@elm.org. Please put "Joel R. Workin Scholarship Application" in the subject line. You may submit your letter of reference with other materials, or your reference letter writer may email it directly.

The scholarship committee will notify applicants of its decision on or before May 29, 2017, Joel's birthday. The 2017 Joel Workin Scholar will then be publicly announced and the \$2,500 grant presented.

On behalf of the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries, Joel's family and friends, and the members of Proclaim, we commend this opportunity to you and invite your application. We hope that you will consider honoring Joel's memory in this way.

Please contact Amalia Vagts at director@elm.org if you have any questions.

2017 Joel Raydon Workin Memorial Scholarship for LGBTQ Seminarians



Joel Raydon Workin (1961-1995) was born in Fargo, ND, and grew up on a farm in nearby Walcott. He took his diploma at Kindred High School in Walcott, received his Bachelor of Theology from Carlton College, Northfield, MN, and his Master of Divinity from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA. In 1986 Joel interned at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Inglewood, CA. In the fall of 1987, Joel came out publicly as a gay candidate for the ordained ministry and was certified for call by the American Lutheran Church (a predecessor body to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). Following this courageous and faithful act, Joel's certification was revoked by the ELCA and his name was never placed on the roster of approved candidates waiting for call. Joel's ministry continued in Los Angeles, however, at the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and as Director of Chris Brownlie Hospice. On December 30, 1988, Joel married Paul Jenkins, whom he loved. Joel was a member of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, North

Hollywood. He and Paul were active in Lutherans Concerned/Los Angeles and Dignity/Los Angeles. Paul died of AIDS on June 6, 1993.

+

Joel loved to read, to dance, to play the piano and to sing. An avid gardener, he took pleasure in renovating the duplex he and Paul purchased in the Silverlake district in 1990. He enjoyed traveling, especially to any city where "Angels in America" was playing. He loved his family and his friends; he also loved debating, discussing and exploring a wide range of ideas. His wit and humor, keen mind and gentle spirit, and his love of life are sorely missed and fondly remembered.

+

In the last weeks of his illness, Joel gave his friends and family permission to sponsor an endowed memorial fund in his name. **The Joel R. Workin Memorial Scholarship Fund** was thus established upon Joel's death from AIDS on November 29, 1995. In keeping with Joel's wishes, awards from the fund are used to provide scholarships to publicly-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer seminary students who proclaim God's love and seek justice for all. The fund is managed by **Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries**, through the InFaith Community Foundation.

Applications due Thursday, April 27, 2017. See www.elm.org/workin-scholarship for details.

2017 Joel R. Workin Essay

Joel Workin was known for his prophetic and expansive voice. His friends refer to his “humor, incisive mind, and deep, caring spirit.” Even now, decades after these essays were written, Joel’s words are fresh and relevant. We bring Joel’s voice to life each year as we invite Workin Scholar applicants to read and respond to Joel’s writing in new ways. Each year, we seek to find Joel’s voice in new ways through new voices.

Please submit the following two pieces of writing.

1. Please write a paragraph or two in response to the following question: What is the prophetic word that LGBTQ people can bring to the church today?
2. Please read Joel’s essay “Overflowing” (attached) and write a 1,000 – 1,500 word reflection on the passage below:

As an LGBTQ person, where have you heard and spoken “Yes, period” and “No, period” on your journey of call thus far? In this 500th anniversary of the Reformation, where do you see the church being called to move more fully into God’s “Yes, period” and what particular gifts do you think LGBTQIA people bring to that movement of reformation?

OVERFLOWING

Further Reflections on Luke 15

When last seen, the prodigal of Luke 15 was off gallivanting in some exotic foreign land, spending a good part of the family fortune on wine, wo/men and song. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, there sat the patient Parent, waiting, hoping, trusting in a final reconciliation. Quite a drama. Quite a story.

It is of great comfort for us all, I would imagine, to make the appropriate analogy and to rest assured that in spite of all our own ramblings and gallivanting, God, the patient Parent, is likewise awaiting our return, waiting to welcome us with open arms and to throw a wild toga party. As the old hymn goes, *“Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, come home.”*

The reality, however, is that this story of waiting, this story of patience is not really a Christian story after all. In spite of all the analogies, all the meaning, there is something about the parable of the Prodigal that misses the very heart of Christianity, for the good news of the Easter gospel is this: God did not sit at home by the mailbox waiting for us to come back. God did not patiently sit at home with our “No, period.” ringing in God’s ears as we shelled peas and began to wonder what exactly we had gotten ourselves into. God did not simply say, “Come home.” Home came to us.

In the fullness of time, after years of “No, period,” of rambling and mumbling, of waiting for reconciliation, at last God

said, "I shall arise and go to my children." And so God in Jesus came, preaching the great commonwealth, calling "come home," which really, as we know, was a homecoming to us. God's heart was, God's heart is, so full of love, of tenderness, of passion, of justice, that it spilled over into the world in the form of Jesus. If we could not come to our senses, our senses would come to us.

But still we said, "No." "No." to God in Jesus. "No." to forgiving seventy times seven. "No." to eating with "those people." "No." to such easy love. It was bad enough to have left home in the first place, please do not embarrass us by giving it back to us free. No. No. No. If it's free everybody will be there. Even them. Even me. No. And so, we said "No, period" again, and killed Jesus.

But not even death will keep God from us. That is the truth of Easter. The love that overflows from God's heart into the world as Jesus, the blood and agony of the cross, the love that overflowed from the tomb that first Easter morning, that love is ever and always "Yes, period." That love, and I say this by faith and not by fact, is the mightiest thing in all creation and nothing will keep it from us. It wells forth from God. It soaks into the cross. It floods from the tomb. It will find us. It will not rest, or be patient or idle or sit at home until "Yes" finds us.

I sometimes wonder what it is that keeps Lesbian and Gay Christians going. Why is it that after years of oppression, of hatred, of violence, of "No, period" at the hand of the Church, we still honor the Prodigal with our concern, our caring, our tireless efforts? Why do Gay & Lesbian Christians keep at it? Why after all we have been through, individually and communally, do we continue to expect something better, to continue to give the best of ourselves? Why do we continue to educate and instigate, to act as if "the Church" mattered? (And I deliberately point to Parent Church.) Why do we even waste time "bashing" it?

We do it, I suppose, because the Love that has overflowed from God's own heart continues to find a home in us, too. Easter is a love that cannot rest while the Prodigal wanders, hurts, suffers, hungers. We want one thing for the Church: that it know in its heart and preach with its voice and live in its life the overflowing love of God. And nothing, not "No, period," not even death, will keep us, keep Easter, keep sense, keep home from the Church.

Christ has risen. *"I will arise ..."*

