



# Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

## Joel R. Workin Scholarship Packet

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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. Matthew James, the Rev. Becca Seely, and the Rev. Amanda Nelson

Date: March 13, 2018

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

We are pleased to invite you to apply for a scholarship for publicly-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual + Lutheran candidates for rostered ministry. The eligible applicant must be a member of Proclaim, the professional community of publicly-identified gender and sexual minority Lutheran rostered ministers and candidates (a program of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries). All application materials are due **Friday, June 15, 2018**.

This scholarship is given in the name of Joel Raydon Workin, one of our movement's holy saints. Joel was one of the three seminarians who came out as gay to their Lutheran candidacy committees in 1989. Joel and his classmates who came out were subsequently refused ordination in the ELCA. This brave act of faithful witness was the spark that ignited a movement of resistance and affirmation of gender and sexual minorities called to rostered ministry in the Lutheran church which eventually gave birth to what is now Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. 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 year, we are pleased to announce that the award comes with a financial scholarship of \$6,000 for qualified educational or candidacy expenses to a gender and sexual minority 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, 2019 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, Christophor Gilbert, and Benjamin Hogue.

## 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.

A complete scholarship application must include the following components:

- A cover letter, briefly introducing yourself to the committee.
- An essay - enclosed in this application packet is a copy of Joel's essay, "The Cost." 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 enclosed 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 Friday, June 15, 2018.**

All application materials must be submitted electronically in PDF to [workinscholarship@elm.org](mailto:workinscholarship@elm.org). Please put "[Your Name] - Scholarship Application" in the subject line. You may submit your letter of reference with other materials, or your reference email it directly to [workinscholarship@elm.org](mailto:workinscholarship@elm.org).

The scholarship committee will notify applicants of its decision on or before May 29, 2018 (Joel's birthday). The 2018 Joel Workin Scholar will then be publicly announced and the \$6,000 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 Amanda Nelson at [amanda@elm.org](mailto:amanda@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.

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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.

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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 Friday, June 15, 2018.  
See [www.elm.org/workin-scholarship](http://www.elm.org/workin-scholarship) for details.

## 2018 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 gender and sexual minority people can bring to the church today?
2. Please read Joel’s essay “The Cost” (enclosed) and write a 1,000–1,500-word reflection on the following:

After coming out, Joel (along with Jeff Johnson and Jim Lancaster) were given an award by Lutherans Concerned/North American (now ReconcilingWorks) in appreciation of “the Gifts of Time and Talent in Outstanding Service to the Membership of Lutherans Concerned/North America as a Model of Faith, Courage, and Integrity.” Joel’s essay, “The Cost” was written in response to receiving this award.

Reflect on the following passage and how your own coming out/closet experiences have impacted your ministry.

Some people think that the three seminarians were very brave and courageous. (Some people think the three were foolish or demonic, and maybe we were a bit of each, perhaps.) But let no one think that we alone are paying the cost. Let no one think that those who “pass,” those who do not say anything are having an easy time of it. Let no one think that the choice is between paying the price or not paying the price. We do all have a choice, whether or not to come out, but we have no choice about the cross. We shall either take ours up on the way out of the closet or we shall be nailed, slowly and silently, to the one that hangs upon the closet wall. There is no way around it.

“The Cost”  
by Joel R. Workin

ITEM: The certificate was given to three gay seminarians in appreciation of "the Gifts of Time and Talent in Outstanding Service to the Membership of Lutherans Concerned/North America as a Model of Faith, Courage, and Integrity." And with the certificate came sustained applause, wave upon wave of admiration, gratitude and respect, as 130 gay Lutherans rose to their feet, giving their version of a group hug.

ITEM: The news was in The Advocate (issue 514, page 20): "A Presbyterian minister who had tested positive for the HIV antibody shot himself to death in Tuscaloosa June 14." And even if all Christendom were to clap its hands, and even if the Almighty Herself were to get down on Her knees and scrub, still nothing would be able to completely clean the blood-soaked carpet of that closet, whatever the closet -- gay, HIV-positive, etc. -- where that child of God lay dead, cold and stiff, unhugged and unapplauded.

As one of the "Berkeley Three" it has been an honor and encouragement to receive the support and even the accolades of many persons, particularly my fellow Gay and Lesbian Lutherans. The past months have been a time of *kairos*, and it seems that a great part of what angers people is a recognition of the cost, the price of being "out" in the Lutheran church. The toll, both professionally and personally, is indeed very high. Careers are ended, even before they are begun. Private life vanishes. Families are exposed to public attention. No one can pretend that being out is easy, that to follow the call to honesty and discipleship in this way is without a cross.

Yet, what is the cost of the closet? Over and over again, as people, many of them closeted, express their rage and sympathy over the price that three seminarians and many others have to pay for being out, I want to know -- what about the cost of the closet?

How does one tally up the toll of living two lives, one of fear and the other of escape, one real the other false, one of tact the other of hiding, one of deceit the other of full-blooded reveling? How much does it cost? Twice as much?

How much energy does it take to every day, every minute, run from God and God's grace and God's gift of gayness, to run from families who wonder why the weather is the only topic of conversation, to run from oneself, which is the most basic thing God has given, and to hide out in well-constructed closets of success, excess, or numbness? How much energy does it take to keep the gospel, the Word, God's own self, our true "created good" selves, at bay?

What pound of flesh is exacted from our very flesh by the closet? How many ulcers? How many headaches? How many heartaches? How many bodies dead in a pool of blood on the closet floor? How many persons sacrificed at the altar of political indifference or religious bigotry? How much flesh, how many corpses do blood-smearred hands need to stack against the closet door to make sure it will remain shut, even as we bury ourselves inside?

Or, literally, in real life, hard earned, greenback, dollars, bucks. What are the expenses involved in buying or renting two homes and setting up two different households, one for each of the lovers,

mailing things in brown paper wrappers, driving far enough away to be somewhat safe, in always being denied the "couple's rate"? What is the dollar cost of the closet?

Some people think that the three seminarians were very brave and courageous. (Some people think the three were foolish or demonic, and maybe we were a bit of each, perhaps.) But let no one think that we alone are paying the cost. Let no one think that those who "pass," those who do not say anything are having an easy time of it. Let no one think that the choice is between paying the price or not paying the price. We do all have a choice, whether or not to come out, but we have no choice about the cross. We shall either take ours up on the way out of the closet or we shall be nailed, slowly and silently, to the one that hangs upon the closet wall. There is no way around it.

I do not know how we each decide which price it is we are willing to pay, which cross it is we are willing to take. In many ways, it seems that coming out is the easiest path.

The Berkeley Three were maybe not so brave after all. They were just too wimpy to face life in the closet. That cross, constructed by the church and the world, was too much for them to bear. And if that is the case, then let me encourage us all to take the easy way out and go to the One whose yoke is easy and burden light. Who knows, you may even get a certificate and a stirring round of applause to go with it.

And if you are still not convinced that the closet has a price, then I pray that God, as She kneels in your closet, trying to get the blood stains out of the carpet, may reach over and scratch your callused hide a time or two, just to make sure you are not dead.