



Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

Joel R. Workin Scholarship Packet

Date: May 4, 2020

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 Gerken-Nelson

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, May 29th, 2020**.

This scholarship is given in the name of Joel Raydon Workin, one of our movement's extraordinary 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 \$6,500 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.

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, the Rev. Christophor Gilbert, the Rev. Benjamin Hogue, S. Leon LaCross, and Cassandra Hartnett.

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.
- A brief paragraph (or two) in response to a prompt (below on pg. 3).
- An essay - enclosed in this application packet is a copy of Joel's essay "Oh, You Should Have Been There." Please read this essay and write a 1,000-5,000-word essay reflecting on the prompt provided on page 3. Joel was a brilliant writer and your essay is one of the most important parts of your application.
- 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, May 29th, 2020.

All application materials must be submitted electronically in PDF to 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 can email it directly to workinscholarship@elm.org.

The scholarship committee will notify applicants of its decision by June 30th, 2020. The 2020 Joel Workin Scholar will then be publicly announced and the \$6,500 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 Amanda Gerken-Nelson at amanda@elm.org if you have any questions.

2020 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, May 29th, 2020.
See www.elm.org/workin-scholarship for details.

2020 Joel R. Workin Essay

Joel Workin was known for his prophetic and expansive voice. His friends refer to his “faithfulness to Jesus Christ, 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 LGBTQIA+ people can bring to the world in the midst of today’s pandemic?
2. Please read Joel’s essay “Oh, You Should Have Been There” included in this application packet and write a 1,000–1,500-word reflection on the following prompt:

What does it mean to proclaim “death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54), as Joel proclaimed during the HIV/AIDS epidemic 30 years ago, to a community that today is being swallowed up by death?

Oh, You Should Have Been There!

Reflections on AIDS, The Quilt, and John 20

The question has haunted me since that Easter morning when years of deep inner fears, doubts, and crises were at last articulated: What does it mean to proclaim that “death is swallowed up in victory” to a community that is being swallowed up in death?

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“Oh, Tom, you should have been there!” That’s what the other disciples said to Thomas when next they saw him after that first Easter. “We have seen and touched the Lord. Peace has filled our hearts. Oh, Tom, you should have been there!” And Thomas wanted to believe his friends. For all the world he wanted to believe, but he had doubts.

It is not that Thomas doubted that the dead could rise. No, he didn’t ask for a pulse rate, for a respiration count, or to hear Jesus’ voice. Any of those things would have proven that Jesus was alive, but Thomas did not ask about any of that. Thomas demanded, “Show me the wounds.” His friends could be as excited as they wanted, but all Thomas knew was that the last time he saw Jesus, Jesus was hanging there on the tree, alone, forsaken, wounded, bleeding, dying. And now they were telling him that this one was also Lord and Savior of the world? Thomas had some doubts. Can the wounded one be Lord? What does God have to do with suffering and the cross? “Show me the wounds,” said Thomas, “prove to me that I have a wounded Savior, a suffering Lord.”

“Oh, Mary, you should have been there!” That’s what her friends said to Mary after our March on Washington for LG- BTQ Rights. “We have seen and touched the Lord. Peace, joy, and courage have filled our hearts. Oh, Mary, you should have been there!” And Mary wanted to believe her friends. For all the world she wanted to believe, but she had doubts.

It is not that Mary doubted the magnitude of the event. She did not ask for official crowd counts, or the texts of speeches in order to show that the hand of God was at work in history, enabling a people to live free. She did not question that. Mary demanded, “What about the Quilt?” Her friends could be all excited, but what about the Quilt, the AIDS Quilt she had heard about which lay there like an open wound on the Mall, as if the gathering had been pierced by a sword? That Quilt which gives silent testimony to the pain, the suffering, lesions, abandonment, and death of so many, some of them Mary’s friends. And now they were telling her of a new spirit in Gay America? Mary had her doubts. What does the hand of God have to do with those panels, those scars, of suffering and death? “What about the Quilt?” asked Mary. “Prove to me that I have a wounded Savior, a suffering Lord.”

Doubting Thomas and doubting Mary ask some pretty hard questions, and as far as I am concerned, some pretty good ones. I ask them, too, and have no easy answers, no theology of suffering, no theology of AIDS. All I, doubting Joel, can say is this: When I stand before the quilt,

at the March, or again as it begins its national tour in Los Angeles; when I place my finger in the mark of the nails; when I am with recently diagnosed PWA's, blinded PWA's, partners of PWA's, angry and fighting PWA's, lesion-covered PWA's, parents of PWA's, gentle and ever-hopeful PWA's; when I place my hand in the wounded side, my only response is, with Thomas: My Lord and my God. I have a wounded Savior, a suffering Lord. The God of the march is the God of the quilt. The God of the resurrection is the God of the cross.

And when I leave that place, that place of death and new life, of scars and healing, when I leave the Quilt, the March, the memorial service, the locked and darkened room, the very side of God, then I say to Tom, and to Mary, and to the world: "Oh, you should have been there!"